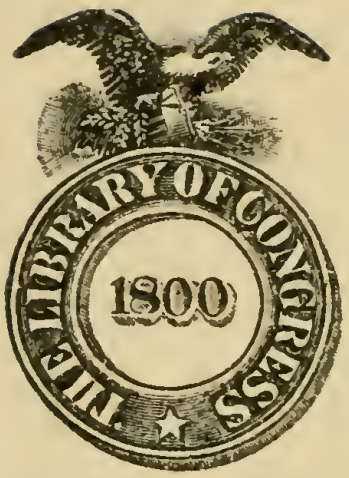

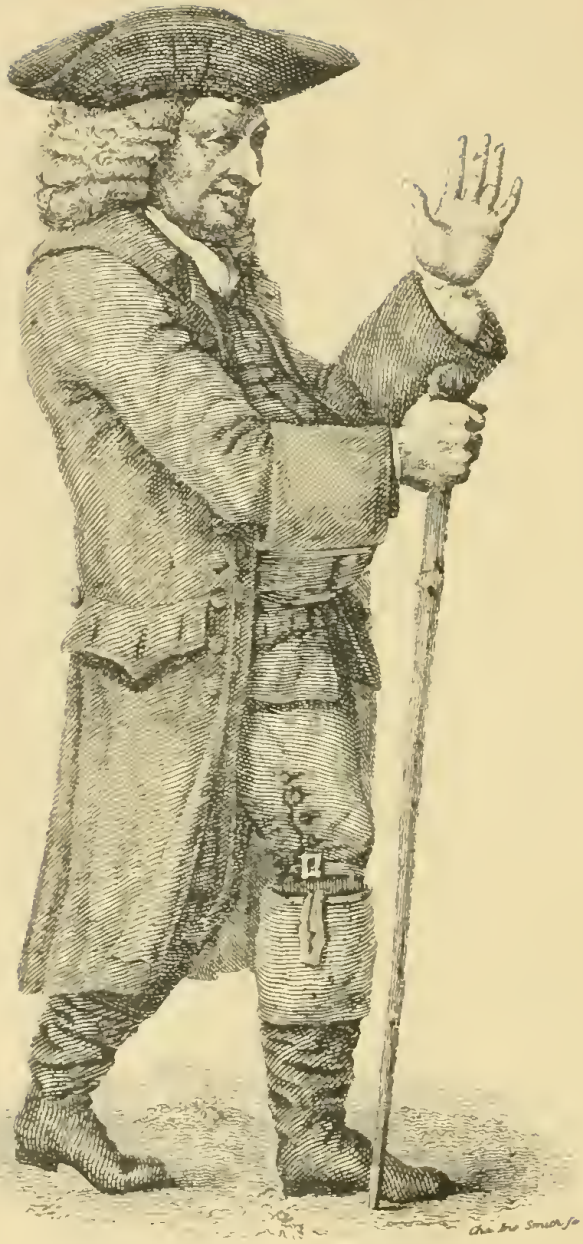

T Trotter del

Chas Bt Smith Sc

Samn. Johnson.

MACAULAY'S

LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

Macmillan's Pocket American and English Classics.

A Series of English Texts, edited for use in Secondary Schools, with Critical Introductions, Notes, etc.

16mo. Cloth. 25c. each.

Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley.
Browning's Shorter Poems.
Browning, Mrs., Poems (Selected).
Burke's Speech on Conciliation.
Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.
Byron's Shorter Poems.
Carlyle's Essay on Burns.
Chaucer's Prologue and Knight's Tale.
Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner.
Cooper's The Deerslayer.
Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans.
De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.
Dryden's Palamon and Arcite.
Early American Orations, 1760–1824.
Eliot's Silas Marner.
Epoch-making Papers in U. S. History.
Franklin's Autobiography.
Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield.
Hawthorne's Twice-told Tales (Selections from).
Irving's Life of Goldsmith.
Irving's The Alhambra.
Irving's Sketch Book.
Longfellow's Evangeline.
Lowell's The Vision of Sir Launfal.
Macaulay's Essay on Addison.
Macaulay's Essay on Hastings.
Macaulay's Essay on Lord Clive.
Macaulay's Essay on Milton.
Macaulay's Life of Samuel Johnson.
Milton's Comus and Other Poems.
Milton's Paradise Lost, Bks. I and II.
Plutarch's Lives (Cæsar, Brutus, and Mark Antony).
Poe's Poems.
Poe's Prose Tales (Selections from).
Pope's Homer's Iliad.
Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies.
Scott's Ivanhoe.
Scott's The Lady of the Lake.
Scott's Marmion.
Shakespeare's As You Like It.
Shakespeare's Hamlet.
Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar.
Shakespeare's Macbeth.
Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice.
Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.
Shelley and Keats: Poems.
Southern Poets: Selections.
Spenser's Faerie Queene, Book I.
Stevenson's Treasure Island.
Tennyson's Idylls of the King.
Tennyson's The Princess.
Tennyson's Shorter Poems.
Woolman's Journal.
Wordsworth's Shorter Poems.

OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

Sam: Johnson

MACAULAY'S

LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDITED WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY

WILLIAM SCHUYLER, A.M.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE ST. LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1903

Set up, electrotyped, and published September, 1903.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

PREFATORY NOTE

It has been my purpose to make this edition of Macaulay's *Life of Samuel Johnson* as interesting as possible to the class of pupils who will study it. The notes are unusually full of explanatory and illustrative matter. It is useless to expect secondary school pupils to pursue independent investigations, and, even if the desire were present, the necessary books are generally lacking. The only book of reference one can count on is Webster's International Dictionary, and there are no notes on points where the definitions of that work are adequate.

Next to the study of Macaulay, the study of Johnson's remarkable life and commanding position in the history of English literature is of great importance. For this purpose, in addition to much matter in the notes taken from Johnson's *Works* and Boswell's *Life*, there has been added an appendix containing selections from the more interesting parts of Macaulay's *Essay on Croker's Boswell* (1831) and Carlyle's *Essay*

on Boswell's Johnson (1832), together with an extract from Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.* References are also made in the notes to some excellent historical novels, which may interest the pupils and bring them into closer contact with the men and times referred to. For further historical references, Green's *Short History of the English People* (Revised Edition) has been used, as it is generally accessible and is written in a most interesting style.

The text followed is that of the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* edition of 1856. The proofs of the *Life* in this edition were corrected by Macaulay himself. The only changes made are the italicizing of the titles of poems, books, and periodicals (which is the custom in the later editions of the *Encyclopædia*), the placing of a period after "Mrs," and the insertion in the dates of commas between the month and year.

My thanks are due to Miss Jennie M. A. Jones and Mr. Philo M. Buck, teachers of English in the St. Louis High School, for many practical suggestions and valuable criticisms and for aid in revising the text and notes.

St. Louis High School,
May, 1903.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I. LIFE AND WRITINGS OF MACAULAY

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, on the 25th of October, 1800. On his father's side, he came from a long line of Scotch Presbyterians, many of them ministers; while his mother was of a good Quaker family. The moral character of his ancestral stock was thus of the highest and strictest, though by no means of the broadest and most unprejudiced; and this may account for many of the striking qualities of his work, brilliant and vivacious as it is in other respects.

Zachary Macaulay, his father, was a stern, taciturn man, having little outward resemblance to his vivacious son, but endowed with the same tireless capacity for work, and the same marvellous memory. He had made a moderate fortune in Jamaica and Sierra Leone; and, on his return to London in 1799, became one of the chief supporters of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery. As the editor of the abolitionist organ, he was closely associated with such men as Henry

Thornton, Thomas Babington, and William Wilberforce. His wife was a pupil of the sisters of Hannah More; and that "high priestess of the brotherhood" became very intimate with the family, exercising a great influence on "young Tom," whose brightness and loquacity made him her especial favorite.

The Macaulay family — three sons and five daughters — were brought up according to the sternest Scotch traditions, by an unbending father, who, on Sundays, read his children a long sermon in the afternoon and another in the evening. Yet parents and children were bound together by the closest ties of hearty affection and devoted love. And the life of this family circle was the eldest son, Thomas.

He was an extraordinarily precocious child. "From the time that he was three years old, he read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire with his book on the ground and a piece of bread and butter in his hand." As he grew older, he read aloud in the evening gatherings of the family from the classical novels, standard histories, and even heavy articles from the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*. When not reading, he poured forth an incessant flood of conversation, lively argument, brilliant sallies of wit, extempore verse, and bad puns. It was of him that Sidney Smith afterwards said, that "he had lately had several brilliant flashes of silence." In all this can be

seen the sources of his natural and original style. The multitude of books devoured furnished him with the inexhaustible store of facts and illustrations which make his writing so concrete and vital; continuous reading aloud trained his ear to combinations of words with easy flow, whose meaning would be most readily grasped; and his incessant chatter perfected that vivacity which carries his readers through the driest facts of history with the interest which accompanies the adventures of the heroes of fiction.

His writing began almost as soon as his talking. When only eight years old he wrote a *Universal History*, and an argument to persuade the inhabitants of Travancore to embrace Christianity. The effect of Scott's metrical romances on the child was the commencement of an imitation entitled *The Battle of Cheviot.* This was abandoned in favor of an epic in Virgil's manner, *Fingal, in XII Books*, of which the first two books were completed, with parts of the others. At the same time he wrote many hymns which were pronounced by Hannah More as "quite extraordinary for such a baby." And all these childish performances, scrupulously correct in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, were dashed off at the highest rate of speed.

The boy's memory was equally astonishing. Though reading with the greatest rapidity, seeming to take in a whole page at a glance, he not only remembered the

substance, but, in many cases, the very words. The story is told that, when only eight years old, he accompanied his father on an afternoon call. While the elders were talking he got hold of a copy of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which he had never seen before, and devoured it with his usual voracity. On his return home he sat down by his mother's bed and recited the poem to her as long as she would let him. This power of memory he scrupulously cultivated; and in later years he wrote of a journey to Ireland: "As I could not read, I used an excellent substitute for reading, — I went through *Paradise Lost* in my head. I could still repeat half of it, and that the best half." One wonders when he found time to do his thinking.

Such an "infant phenomenon" could easily have been spoiled. And it is to the wisdom and watchful care of his devoted mother that Macaulay grew up with a personal modesty as striking as his brilliancy. "You will believe," she writes, "that we never appear to regard anything he does as anything more than a school-boy's amusement." And in a letter written him in his thirteenth year she says: "I know you write with great ease yourself, and would rather write ten poems than prune one. All your pieces are much mended after a little reflection; therefore, take your solitary walks and think over each separate thing.

Spare no time or trouble, and render each piece as perfect as you can, and then leave the event without one anxious thought." It was to such wise direction that Macaulay owed his strict literary conscience, which made him in later years write and rewrite everything he intended to be of permanent value.

The first trial of Macaulay's life was at the age of twelve, when he was sent to an excellent small school near Cambridge. The poor boy suffered terribly from homesickness. His letters to his mother show this in the most pathetic way. One of them his biographer, Trevelyan, would not publish, because it was "too cruel." In others he writes: "The days are long, and I feel that I should be happy were it not that I want home. . . . Every night when I lie down I reflect that another day is cut off from the tiresome period of absence. . . . Everything brings home to my recollection. . . . Everything I read, or see, or hear brings it to my mind. You told me I should be happy when I once came here, but not an hour passes in which I do not shed tears at thinking of home. Every hope, however unlikely to be realized, affords me some small consolation."

The school was an excellent one, and the master, Mr. Preston, a good scholar and a thorough instructor; but Macaulay had never cared to play with other boys, and the regular lessons and hours of study interfered

with the unbridled reading which was his delight. However, Mr. Preston allowed his charge free run of a large library. "He lends me any books for which I ask him," the boy wrote his mother, "so that I am nearly as well off in this respect as at home; except for one thing which, though I believe it is useful, is not very pleasant. I can only ask for one book at a time, and cannot touch another till I have read it through." He was certainly not restricted in his choice of books, for before he was fifteen he recommended his mother to read Boccaccio — at least in Dryden's metrical version. Every moment, outside of his allotted tasks, was devoted to history, prose fiction, and poetry; but he never appears to have been interested in any of the simple scientific questions or mathematical and mechanical problems which occupy the minds of so many bright boys.

In 1818 he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. The study then most esteemed in that university was mathematics; and for this Macaulay, after a transient fancy for its rudiments, entertained an intense dislike. His marvellous memory was of little service here, and he hated above all things prolonged and concentrated thought, especially on abstract subjects. "Oh, for words to express my abomination of that science!" he wrote his mother; "if a name sacred to the useful and embellished arts may be applied to the perception

and the recollection of certain properties in numbers and figures! Oh, that I had to learn astrology, or demonology, or School Divinity! . . . 'Discipline' of the mind! Say rather starvation, confinement, torture, annihilation! But it must be. I feel myself becoming a personification of Algebra, a living trigonometrical canon, a walking table of logarithms. All my perceptions of elegance and beauty gone, or at least going. . . . Farewell, then, Homer and Sophocles and Cicero; . . . my classics must be Woodhouse, and my amusements summing an infinite series. . . . Farewell; and tell Selina and Jane to be thankful that it is not a necessary part of female education to get a headache daily without acquiring one practical truth or beautiful image in return. Again, and with affectionate love to my father, farewell wishes your most miserable and mathematical son."

It would have been well for Macaulay had he driven himself to a thorough study of the higher mathematics. This might have corrected his desultory habits of thought and his tendency to avoid deep questions, and have added to the admirable perspicuity of his style a precision and exactness which it often lacks. As it was, it interfered somewhat with his standing in the University, where at that time "a minimum of honors in mathematics was an indispensable condition for competing for the chancellor's medals — the test

of classical proficiency before the institution of the classical tripos. Macaulay failed even to obtain the lowest place among the Junior Optimes, and was, what is called in University parlance 'gulphed.' But he won the prize for Latin declamation, he twice gained the chancellor's medals for English verse; and, by winning the Craven Scholarship, he sufficiently proved his classical attainments."[1]

In the social life of Cambridge he was very prominent, and became a great favorite. "So long as a door was open, or a light was burning in any of the courts, Macaulay was always in a mood for conversation or companionship." He was one of the brightest talkers in the Union Debating Society, and as a result of the never ending discussions he changed the Tory politics in which he had been brought up for those of the Whig party. This was a great blow to his devoted parents and the wayward youth had to answer their charge of being a "son of anarchy and confusion." Still, owing to his strong common sense, or perhaps to his disinclination to follow out an idea to its logical conclusion, he did not, though it was a time of intense political excitement, align himself with the Radicals; but "took his sides with the old and practical Whigs, who were well on their guard against 'too much zeal,' but who saw their way to such re-

[1] J. Cotter Morison's *Macaulay*.

forms as could be realized in the conditions of the time."

Macaulay took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1822, and about the same time he learned that his father's business was on the verge of dissolution. The good Zachary Macaulay in his devotion to the abolitionist cause had paid little attention to his own affairs, and his partner lacked ability. Then it was that the son showed the sterling qualities which characterised him. He received the news "with a 'frolic welcome' of courage and devotion." "He was firmly prepared," he said, "to encounter the worst with fortitude, and to do his utmost to retrieve it by exertion." He was as good as his word. By taking pupils he supported himself while he was working for a fellowship worth $1500 a year for seven years; and became, as it were, a second father to his brothers and sisters. And this he did "with the sunniest radiance, as if not a care rankled in his heart." His favorite sister, Hannah, said, that "those who did not know him *then* never knew him in his most brilliant, witty, and fertile vein." And his nephew writes: "He quietly took up the burden which his father was unable to bear; and before many years had elapsed the fortunes of all for whose welfare he considered himself responsible were abundantly secured. In the course of the efforts which he expended on the accomplishment

of this result he unlearned the very notion of framing his method of life with a view to his own pleasure; and such was his high and simple nature, that it may well be doubted whether it ever crossed his mind that to live wholly for others was a sacrifice at all."

Stern old Zachary Macaulay had been unable to imbue his brilliant son with his own gloomy religion. He had even driven him to such a point as to make him hate all theological speculation, and to deride such questions as "the necessity of human actions and the foundation of moral obligation." But certainly, in the realm of practical moral conduct, Thomas Macaulay, whether from nature or from education, left nothing to be desired.

The Fellowship was not gained till the third and last trial in 1824; but Macaulay had already begun to make somewhat of a literary reputation. He had won the Greaves historical prize: *On the Conduct and Character of William the Third*, — the hero of his *History*. Some portions of it have been published and show that his famous style was quite natural and not an artificial production. Compare the following passage with any of his later essays: —

"Lewis XIV was not a great general. He was not a great legislator. But he was in one sense of the word a great king. He was perfect master of all the mysteries of the science of royalty — of the arts which

at once extend power and conciliate popularity, which most advantageously display the merits and most dexterously conceal the deficiencies of a sovereign."

But what was of more importance to his future career was the contribution of a number of poems, articles, and tales to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine.* Of the poems, *Naseby* and *Ivry* still live and are as good as any of his later verse; the stories, *Fragments of a Roman Tale* and *Scenes from Athenian Revels,* give evidence that he might have become a better historical novelist than any one since Walter Scott; and one paper, *A Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton, touching the Great Civil War,* is a "beautiful piece of majestic English." It is published in the first volume of Macaulay's *Miscellanies,* and in refinement and nobility of diction is decidedly superior to the more flashy and oratorical style displayed in his subsequent works. It was Macaulay's own favorite of his earlier pieces; and many critics are of the opinion that his political life and parliamentary speeches had an unfavorable effect on the finer qualities of his style.

Zachary Macaulay was by no means pleased with his son's literary efforts. The character of *Knight's Quarterly* seemed to his stern morality frivolous and even improper, and the son again had to defend himself from the father's animadversions. These articles,

however, brought Macaulay to the notice of Jeffrey, then editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, who was looking about for some brilliant young writer to put new life into this periodical. The essay on *Milton* was the result, and on its publication in August, 1825, the author "awoke to find himself famous." It was distinctly a new and original force in literature, and not only fixed Macaulay's position in the world of letters, but was the indirect means of launching him on the political career which later absorbed so much of his energies. Jeffrey wrote him: "The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style." The admiration of the editor was echoed by the whole English-speaking race, which had found a new author after its own heart; one who was sure of himself, who was not bothered with dubious problems or intellectual abstractions, who knew his own mind and could speak it forth with absolute clearness so that all who ran might read; who wrote with a "splendor of imagery," a richness of comparison and illustration, and a vivacity that made one certain that he was reading good literature. And Macaulay was clever enough to see the secret of his popularity and continue it. As he wrote to Macvey Napier, a later editor of the *Review:* "Periodical works like ours, which unless they strike at the first reading are not likely to strike at all, whose whole life is a month

or two, may, I think, be allowed to be sometimes even viciously florid. Probably, in estimating the real value of any tinsel which I may put upon my articles, you and I should not materially differ. But it is not by his own taste, but by the taste of the fish, that the angler is determined in his choice of bait."

Milton was the first of about forty essays which Macaulay contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* at various times for the next twenty years. These are the works which gave him his widespread contemporary popularity, and of all his writings are the most widely read to-day. It is said that the libraries of many of the English settlers in Australia contain, beside the Bible and Shakespeare, only Macaulay's *Essays*. To many people they are their sole source of historical knowledge, and they are undoubtedly the best introduction to historical study.

Macaulay "did for the historical essay what Haydn did for the Sonata, and Watt for the steam engine: he found it rudimentary and unimportant, and left it complete and a thing of power. Before his time there was the ponderous history, — generally in quarto, — and there was the antiquarian dissertation. There was also the historical review, containing alternate pages of extract and comment — generally rather dull and gritty. But the historical essay as he conceived it, and with the prompt inspiration of a real discoverer

immediately put into practical shape, was as good as unknown before him. . . . To take a bright period or personage of history, to frame it in a firm outline, to conceive it at once in article size, and then to fill in this limited canvas with sparkling anecdote, telling bits of color, and facts all fused together by a real genius for narrative, was the scene painting which Macaulay applied to history. . . . And to this day his *Essays* remain the best of their class not only in England but in Europe. Slight or even trivial in the field of historical erudition and critical inquiry, they are masterpieces if regarded in the light of great popular cartoons on subjects taken from modern history. They are painted, indeed, with such freedom, vividness, and power, that they may be said to enjoy a sort of tacit monopoly of the periods and characters to which they refer, in the estimation of the general public. Any portion of English history which Macaulay has travelled over is found to be moulded into a form which the average Englishman at once enjoys and understands. He did, it has been truly said, in a small way, and in solid prose, the same thing for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that Shakespeare did in a poetical way for the fifteenth century. . . . He succeeded in achieving the object which he always professed to aim at — making history attractive and interesting — to a degree never attained before. This

is either a merit or a fault, according to the point of view from which we regard it; but from every point of view, it was no common feat."[1]

Mendelssohn is the best introduction to classical music, but the more one knows of classical music the less he cares for Mendelssohn. And so it is with Macaulay's *Essays* as compared with the highest forms of literature. Notwithstanding the undoubted merits of the *Essays* and their permanent popularity, it is certain that when one has attuned his ear to the finest *nuances* of the most refined English prose, he tires of the snap of Macaulay's short sentences, and the too obvious antithetical balance of his ringing periods. The oratorical devices for hammering home an idea, which succeed when assisted by vocal melody and graceful gesture, become monotonous in cold type. Macaulay's avowed aim was to make his writing "read as if it had been spoken off." But he forgot that there are delicate qualities in the finest writing which are above what is possible to the most accomplished anecdotist and the most successful orator. Then, too, one who has accustomed himself to deep thought and careful discrimination, is liable to be offended by Macaulay's cocksure judgments, insufficient generalizations, picturesque exaggerations, and unreasonable prejudices. "Taken all round, his in-

[1] J. Cotter Morison's *Macaulay*, pp. 68, 69.

sight into men's bosoms was not deep, and was decidedly limited. Complex and involved characters, in which the good and evil were interwoven in odd and original ways, in which vulgar and obvious faults or vices concealed deeper and rarer qualities underneath, were beyond his ken. In men like Rousseau, Byron, Boswell, even Walpole, he saw little more than all the world could see — those patent breaches of conventional decorum and morality which the most innocent young person could join him in condemning. But the great civic and military qualities — resolute courage, promptitude, self-command, and firmness of purpose — he could thoroughly understand and warmly admire."[1] There is no doubt that Macaulay was often prejudiced and gave his prejudices full vent in his writings, but it must also be said that for the most part, like Samuel Johnson, his prejudices were on the right side, — that of reasonable liberty and rational progress.

There is a great difference between the first thirteen essays and those which appeared after his return from India in 1838. The former were often written in great haste in the intervals snatched from his parliamentary business, and were never intended for permanent publication. In fact, Macaulay resisted their republication as long as he could, and was only forced to it, in

[1] J. Cotter Morison's *Macaulay*.

1843, by the appearance of several American editions which had an enormous sale in England as well as in the United States. In the authorized editions he made many changes, improved the style, and on the essays written after 1834, he bestowed as much care in composition as he put on his *History*. He wrote to Macvey Napier about his *Essay on Bacon:* "I never bestowed so much care on anything I have written. There is not a sentence in the latter half of the article which has not been repeatedly recast. I have no expectation that the popularity of the article will bear any proportion to the trouble which I have expended on it. But the trouble has been so great a pleasure that I have already been greatly overpaid. Pray look carefully to the printing."

It may be interesting to have Macaulay's own judgment on these works, as given in his letters to Napier: "Very little, if any, of the effect of my most popular articles is produced either by minute research into rare books, or by allusions to mere topics of the day. . . . I hope in a few weeks to send you a prodigiously long article about Lord Bacon, which I think will be popular with the many, whatever the few who know something about the matter may think of it. . . . [Magazine articles] are not, I think, made for duration, — and few people read an article in a review twice. A bold, dashing scene-painting manner is that which

always succeeds best in periodical writing. . . . I have done my best to ascertain what I can and what I cannot do. There are extensive classes of subjects which I think myself able to treat as few people can treat them. After this, you cannot suspect me of any affectation of modesty; and you will therefore believe that I tell you what I sincerely think, when I say that I am not successful in analyzing the effect of works of genius. I have written several things on historical, political, and moral questions, of which, on the fullest reconsideration, I am not ashamed, and by which I should be willing to be estimated; but I have never written a page of criticism on poetry, or the fine arts, which I would not burn if I had the power. Hazlitt used to say of himself, 'I am nothing if not critical.' The case with me is directly the reverse. I have a strong and acute enjoyment of works of the imagination, but I have never habituated myself to dissect them. Perhaps I enjoy them the more keenly for that reason. Such books as Lessing's *Laocoön*, such passages as the criticism of Hamlet in *Wilhelm Meister* fill me with wonder and despair."

Whatever may be their faults, their merits are such that the *Essays* of Macaulay will probably be read by thousands of people as long as an interest in English history and English literature exists.

In 1826 Macaulay was admitted to the bar, and

went several times on the northern circuit. But he was not fond of the practice of law. It required too much hard and continued application to delicate and difficult problems to suit his offhand methods of thinking. So he obtained but few clients. But during this time he was busy with what was of far more importance to his future career. His essays continued to appear in the *Edinburgh Review*, increasing the popularity gained by the *Milton*. Their strong Whig bias attracted the attention of the Ministry then in power, and in 1828 Lord Lyndhurst made him a Commissioner of Bankruptcy. In 1829 Macaulay wrote two vigorous articles attacking Mill's *Essay on Government*. These so impressed the Marquis of Lansdowne that, in 1830, he offered Macaulay, though an entire stranger, a seat in Parliament for the borough of Calne.

Thus began his Parliamentary career which, with two intervals of about five years each, lasted nearly till the close of his life. He took his seat at the commencement of the memorable struggle for parliamentary reform which handed over the political power from the country gentry to the great middle class. In this he took a prominent part and contributed greatly to the final victory. His very first speech on the *Reform Bill* put him in the front rank of parliamentary orators. The Speaker told him that "in all his

prolonged experience he had never seen the house in such a state of excitement." "Whenever he rose to speak," said Gladstone, "it was a summons like a trumpet call to fill the benches." "It may well be questioned whether Macaulay was so well endowed for any career as that of a great orator. The rapidity of speech suited the impetuosity of his genius far better than the slow labor of composition. He has the true Demosthenic rush in which argument becomes incandescent with passion. It is not going too far to say that he places the question on loftier grounds of state policy than any of his colleagues." His fourth speech on the Reform Bill called out in answer all the best orators of the Tory side, including Sir Robert Peel himself. Macaulay's oratorical power could receive no higher praise.

For the next four years he lived under an incessant strain. Besides his parliamentary duties and official work, he became one of the lions of London society and "a constant guest at Holland House — the imperious mistress of which [Lady Holland] scolded, flattered, and caressed him with a patronizing condescension that would not have been to every person's taste." He was also intimate with the leading wits of the day, with whom he more than held his own. Still continuing to write for the *Edinburgh Review*, he filled his engagements "in hastily snatched moments of

leisure, saved with a miserly thrift from public and official work, by rising at five and writing till breakfast."

And in all this he was still hampered by his pecuniary affairs, as his family was practically dependent on him. But his ingrained honesty never wavered. He voted for the bill abolishing his commissionership, although his Cambridge Fellowship was just expiring, and he was earning only about $1000 a year by his pen. In fact, at one time he was forced to sell the medals won at the University. However, he soon received another post on the Indian Board of Control, which placed him in comparative comfort. But this too was put in jeopardy by his high sense of honor and duty. The slavery bill brought in by the Government, though quite liberal, did not satisfy old Zachary Macaulay and other fanatical abolitionists. The son at once told his chiefs he could not go against his father, saying: "He has devoted his whole life to the question; and I cannot grieve him by giving way, when he wishes me to stand firm." So he sent in his resignation, and, as an independent member, criticised the bill. But he expected no mercy. "I know that, if I were Minister," he wrote, "I would not allow such latitude to any man in office; and so I told Lord Althorp." Macaulay's noble independence was appreciated. His resignation was refused, and he remained "as good friends with the Ministers as ever."

But his pecuniary embarrassments still pressed heavily upon him. In December, 1833, he accepted a position on the Supreme Council of India, which involved his absence from England for several years. He well knew that it was dangerous to his political career to exile himself at the present juncture, but the salary of nearly $50,000 a year could not be overlooked by a man in his position. His views are given in a letter to Lord Lansdowne: —

"I feel that the sacrifice which I am about to make is great. But the motives which urge me to make it are quite irresistible. Every day that I live I become less and less desirous of great wealth. But every day makes me more sensible of the importance of a competence. Without a competence, it is not very easy for a public man to be honest: it is almost impossible for him to be thought so. I am so situated that I can subsist only in two ways: by being in office, and by my pen. Hitherto, literature has been merely my relaxation — the amusement of perhaps a month in the year. I have never considered it as the means of support. I have chosen my own topics, taken my own time, and dictated my own terms. The thought of becoming a bookseller's hack — of writing to relieve, not the fulness of the mind, but the emptiness of the pocket; of spurring a jaded fancy to reluctant exertion; of filling sheets with trash merely that sheets may be

filled; of bearing from publishers and editors what Dryden bore from Tonson, and what, to my own knowledge, Mackintosh bore from Lardner, is horrible to me. Yet thus it must be, if I should quit office. Yet to hold office merely for the sake of emolument would be more horrible still. The situation in which I have been placed for some time back would have broken the spirit of many men. An opportunity has offered itself. It is in my power to make the last days of my father comfortable, to educate my brother, to provide for my sisters, to procure a competence for myself. I may hope, by the time I am thirty-nine or forty, to return to England with a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. To me that would be affluence. I never wished for more."

During his voyage to India, on which he was accompanied by his sister Hannah, he shut himself up from the rest of the passengers. Outside of his immediate family, though a general favorite and possessing many acquaintances, he formed no close connections. It is to be noted as a characteristic trait explaining many qualities of his writings that he never was in love. Books always were much more to him than men. He writes: "My power of finding amusement without companions was pretty well tried on my voyage. I read insatiably; the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil, Horace, Cæsar's *Commentaries*, Bacon's *De Augmentis*, Dante,

Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, *Don Quixote*, Gibbon's *Rome*, Mill's *India*, all the seventy volumes of Voltaire, Sismondi's *History of France*, and the seven thick folios of the *Biographia Britannica*." He had agreed to keep up his connection with the *Edinburgh Review*, stipulating, however, that his pay should be in books.

While in India he lived in a very modest style, and continued his enormous reading, though he accomplished an immense amount of other work. Besides his official duties as member of the Council, he gratuitously undertook the reorganization of the public instruction and the drawing up of a penal code. In both these tasks, he accomplished beneficial and lasting results. Mr. Justice Stephen says: "The Indian Penal Code is to the English Criminal law what a manufactured article ready for use is to the materials out of which it is made. It is to the French Code Pénal, and I may add the North German Code of 1871, what a finished picture is to a sketch. . . . Its practical success has been complete. The clearest proof of this is, that hardly any questions have arisen upon it which have had to be determined by the Courts, and that few and slight amendments have had to be made by the Legislature." In this work, Macaulay's unshakable honesty brought down upon him the opposition of many influential Anglo-Indians, who had profited by the old unjust laws; and so bitter were the attacks

that for some time he did not dare to let his sister see the morning papers. And yet, "he vigorously advocated and supported the freedom of the Press at the very moment when it was attacking him with the most rancorous invective."

In January, 1838, he set sail for England with the competence he had so much desired, to find that his father had died while he was on the ocean. His mother had passed away shortly after his great speeches in 1831.

Soon after his return, he made a tour in Italy, where he finished the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, which he had begun in India. These were published in 1842. Critics have denied them the merits of the highest poetry, either in thought or versification. But their unfading popularity with several generations of healthy and hearty schoolboys shows that Macaulay when he wrote of "brave Horatius, who kept the bridge so well," had something vital to say and said it in a vital manner. Trevelyan writes: "Eighteen thousand of the *Lays of Ancient Rome* were sold in ten years, forty thousand in twenty years, and by June, 1875, upwards of a hundred thousand copies had passed into the hands of readers."

Macaulay on his return had intended to devote himself to literature, and to write his *History of England*, which he had planned to extend from the accession of

James II. to the death of George IV. But the Whig ministry needed all the support they could get. He was returned to Parliament as member for Edinburgh in 1839, and soon after was made Secretary at War.

In 1841 the ministry went out of office, and though Macaulay retained his seat for Edinburgh, and attended the sittings of Parliament, he gave himself more and more to literature. In 1844, with *The Earl of Chatham*, he closed the great series of essays for the *Edinburgh Review*, in order to devote himself to the *History*, which he intended to make the chief work of his life. In 1847 he lost his seat in Parliament. His narrow-minded Scotch constituents were unable to appreciate his lack of sectarianism shown by voting for the "Maynooth Grant" to support a Roman Catholic school in Ireland. Of this he wrote to his sister Hannah — now Lady Trevelyan: "I hope that you will not be much vexed, for I am not vexed, but as cheerful as ever I was in my life. I have been completely beaten. . . . I will make no hasty resolutions; but everything seems to indicate that I ought to take this opportunity of retiring from public life." After careful consideration, he refused election from another borough and bent all his energies to bringing out the first part of his *History*.

The first two volumes of Macaulay's *History of England* appeared in November, 1848, and had an immediate success unequalled by any serious work in the

English language. The first edition of 3000 copies was sold out in ten days. In less than four months 13,000 were disposed of. In America, 40,000 copies were sold almost immediately, and the Harpers wrote Macaulay that in all about 200,000 copies would be disposed of in six months. The next two volumes appeared in 1855 and had a still greater sale. The publishers were able to pay him in a few months $100,000 — "the greatest amount ever paid at one time for one edition of a book." The fifth volume which brought the *History* down to the death of William III. was published in 1860, after his death.

There is no space here to discuss adequately the merits and defects of this monumental work. It is sufficient to say that its enormous popularity was due to Macaulay's plan of writing history. And he has given us a clear statement of that plan. It was that history should be a *true novel*, "interesting the affections, and presenting pictures to the imagination. . . . It should invest with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory; call up our ancestors before us with all their peculiarities of language, manners, and garb; show us over their houses, seat us at their tables, rummage their old-fashioned wardrobes, explain the uses of their ponderous furniture." In a letter to Napier he wrote: "I have at last begun my historical

labors. The materials for an amusing narrative are immense. I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." And no one understood his public better than Macaulay.

His last years were darkened by disease and failing strength. The magnificent machine, worked for a full half century at its extreme capacity, at length broke down. In 1852 he had a severe attack of heart disease followed by asthma and fainting spells from which he never recovered. Yet, in spite of suffering and weakness, he still struggled on with his work. In the same year Edinburgh repented of its former treatment of him, and unasked returned him to Parliament. But though he managed to attend some of the sittings of Parliament, — when his presence was needed, — and made one or two speeches, the effort was too much for him, and he bent his failing powers to the furtherance of his *History*. "I should be glad to finish William before I go," he wrote. "But this is like the old excuses that were made to Charon." Still he found time to write five biographies which he had agreed to do for the *Encyclopædia Britannica : Atterbury* (1853), *Bunyan* (1854), *Goldsmith* and *Johnson* (1856), and *William Pitt* (1859). These are undoubtedly his very best works, having all the merits and but few of the faults of his early essays. The biography of Pitt, the last

work published in his lifetime, "is, perhaps, the most perfect thing he has left. Nearly all the early faults of his rhetorical manner have disappeared; there is no eloquence, no declamation, but a lofty moral impressiveness which is very touching and noble." The *Life of Johnson*, though marred by some of Macaulay's characteristic prejudices and exaggerations, is only second to the *Pitt*.

The shadows of approaching death were partly illumined by the honors which came too late for their full enjoyment. He was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University, made a fellow of the Royal Society, elected a foreign member of the Institution of France, and of the academies of Utrecht, Munich, and Turin. He was made a Knight of the Prussian Order of Merit, Oxford gave him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and, in 1857, the Queen made him a lord, with the title of Baron Macaulay of Rothley. He was the first literary man to receive the last-named honor in recognition of his literary work. But the year 1859 found his health failing very rapidly — this being hastened by his melancholy anticipations of his sister Hannah's impending departure for India with her husband. Yet he still kept up his cheerfulness, and, on October 25, 1859, he wrote: "My birthday — I am fifty-nine. Well, I have had a happy life. I do not know that any one whom I have seen close has

had a happier. Some things I regret; but who is better off?" He died suddenly and peacefully at his sister's house, the evening of the 28th of December, 1859. He is buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

II. MACAULAY'S WORKS

(1) POETRY

Lines to the Memory of William Pitt, 1813.
Pompeii: Prize poem winning the Chancellor's medal, Cambridge, 1819.
A Radical War Song, 1820.
Evening: Prize poem winning the Chancellor's medal, Cambridge, 1821.
Ivry, 1824.
The Battle of Moncontour, 1824.
The Battle of Naseby, 1824.
The Cavalier's March to London, 1824.

(The last two are known as *Songs of the Civil War.*)

Sermon in a Churchyard, 1825.
Translation from A. V. Arnault, 1826.
Dies Iræ, 1826.
The Marriage of Tirzah and Ahirad, 1827.
The Country Clergyman's Trip to Cambridge, 1827.
Song: "Oh, stay, Madonna, stay!" 1827.
The Deliverance of Vienna (translated from Filicaja), 1828.

The Armada, 1832.
The Last Buccaneer, 1839.
Horatius.
The Battle of Lake Regillus.
Virginia.
The Prophecy of Capys.

(The last four are known as *The Lays of Ancient Rome.* They were published in 1842.)

Epitaph on a Jacobite, 1845.
Lines Written on the Night of the Thirtieth of July, 1847.

(At the close of his unsuccessful contest for Edinburgh.)

Valentine: To the Hon. Mary C. Stanhope, 1851.
Paraphrase of a Passage in the Chronicle of the Monk of St. Gall, 1856.

(2) PROSE PAPERS PUBLISHED IN KNIGHT'S "QUARTERLY MAGAZINE"

Fragments of a Roman Tale, June, 1823.
On the Royal Society of Literature, June, 1823.
Slavery in the West Indies, June, 1823.
Scenes from the Athenian Revels, January, 1824.
Criticisms on the Principal Italian Writers: No. 1, Dante, January, 1824.
Criticisms on the Principal Italian Writers: No. 2, Petrarch, April, 1824.
Some Account of the Great Lawsuit between the Parishes of St. Denis and St. George in the Water, April, 1824.

A Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton touching the Great Civil War, August, 1824.
On the Athenian Orators, August, 1824.
A Prophetic Account of a Grand National Epic, to be entitled "The Wellingtoniad," and to be published in 2824, November, 1824.
On Mitford's History of Greece, November, 1824.

(3) ESSAYS PUBLISHED IN THE "EDINBURGH REVIEW"

Milton, August, 1825.
The London University, January, 1826.
The Social and Industrial Capacities of Negroes, March, 1827.
Machiavelli, March, 1827.
The Present Administration, June, 1827.
John Dryden, January, 1828.
History, May, 1828.
Hallam's Constitutional History, September, 1828.
Mill's Essay on Government, March, 1829.
The Westminster Reviewer's Defence of Mill, June, 1829.
The Utilitarian Theory of Government, October, 1829.
Southey's Colloquies on Society, January, 1830.
Mr. Robert Montgomery's Poems, April, 1830.
Sadler's Law of Population, July, 1830.
Southey's Edition of the Pilgrim's Progress, December, 1830.
Civil Disabilities of the Jews, January, 1831.
Sadler's Refutation Refuted, January, 1831.
Moore's Life of Lord Byron, June, 1831.

Croker's Edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson, September, 1831.
Lord Nugent's Memorials of Hampden, December, 1831.
Burleigh and His Times, April, 1832.
Mirabeau, July, 1832.
Lord Mahon's War of the Succession in Spain, January, 1833.
Horace Walpole, October, 1833.
William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, January, 1834.
Sir James Mackintosh, July, 1835.
Lord Bacon, July, 1837.
Sir William Temple, October, 1838.
Gladstone on Church and State, April, 1839.
Lord Clive, January, 1840.
Von Ranke's History of the Popes, October, 1840.
Leigh Hunt's Comic Dramatists of the Restoration, January, 1841.
Lord Holland, July, 1841.
Warren Hastings, October, 1841.
Frederick the Great, April, 1842.
Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay, January, 1843.
The Life and Writings of Addison, July, 1843.
Barère's Memoirs, April, 1844.
The Earl of Chatham, October, 1844.

(4) BIOGRAPHIES PUBLISHED IN THE "ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA"

Francis Atterbury, December, 1853.
John Bunyan, May, 1854.
Oliver Goldsmith, February, 1856.

Samuel Johnson, December, 1856.
William Pitt, January, 1859.

(5) SPEECHES, CHIEFLY IN PARLIAMENT

Jewish Disabilities, April 5, 1830 ; April 17, 1833.
Parliamentary Reform, March 2, 1831 ; July 5, 1831 ; September 20, 1831 ; October 10, 1831 ; December 16, 1831 ; February 28, 1832.
Anatomy Bill, February 27, 1832.
Repeal of the Union with Ireland, February 6, 1833.
The Government of India, July 10, 1833.
The Edinburgh Election of 1839, May 29, 1839.
Confidence in the Ministry of Lord Melbourne, January 29, 1840.
War with China, April 7, 1840.
Copyright, February 5, 1841 ; April 6, 1842.
The People's Charter, May 3, 1842.
The Gates of Somnauth, March 9, 1843.
The Treaty of Washington, March 21, 1843.
The State of Ireland, February 19, 1844.
Dissenters' Chapels Bill, June 16, 1844.
Post Office Espionage, June 24, 1844.
Opening Letters in the Post Office, July 2, 1844.
Sugar Duties, February 26, 1845.
Maynooth, April 14, 1845.
Theological Tests in the Scotch Universities, July 9, 1845.
Corn Laws, December 2, 1845.
The Ten Hours' Bill, May 22, 1846.
The Literature of Britain, November 4, 1846.

Education, April 19, 1847.
Inaugural Speech at the University of Glasgow, March 21, 1849.
On Retiring from Political Life, March 22, 1849.
Reëlection to Parliament, November 2, 1852.
Exclusion of Judges from the House of Commons, June 1, 1853.

(6) THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

Introductory Report on the Indian Penal Code, October 14, 1837.
Notes on the Penal Code.

(7) THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

The History of England from the Accession of James the Second. Vols. I. and II., 1848; Vols. III. and IV., 1855; Vol. V., 1860.

III. JOHNSON'S PRINCIPAL WORKS

Irene, a Tragedy. Nearly completed in 1737.
Contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, begun in 1738.
London, a Satire, 1738.
Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput, 1740–1743.
Life of Savage, 1744.
Dictionary of the English Language, 1747–1755.
The Vanity of Human Wishes, a Satire, 1749.
The Rambler, 1750–1752.
Papers in *The Adventurer*, 1752.
Papers in the *Literary Magazine*, 1756–1757.
The Idler, 1758–1760.

Rasselas, 1759.
A Journey to the Hebrides, 1775.
Taxation no Tyranny, 1775.
Lives of the Poets, 1777–1781.

IV. CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF ENGLISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE IN JOHNSON'S TIME

1701–1714. Queen Anne.
1709. *The Tatler.*
1711. *The Spectator.*
1714–1727. George I.
1715–1774. Louis XV., King of France.
1715. First Jacobite Rising under "James III.," or "The Old Pretender."
1715. Pope's *Iliad.*
1723. Pope's *Odyssey.*
1726. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.*
1727–1760. George II.
1730. Thomson's *Seasons.*
1732. Pope's *Essay on Man.*
1740–1786. Frederick II., "the Great," King of Prussia.
1740–1780. Maria Theresa, "The Empress Queen" of Austria and Hungary.
1740–1748. War of the Austrian Succession. (In America called King George's War.)
1740. Richardson's *Pamela.*

1742. Fielding's *Joseph Andrews.*
1745–1746. Second Jacobite Rising under Charles Edward, "The Young Pretender."
1748. Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe.*
1749. Fielding's *Tom Jones.*
1751. Gray's *Elegy.*
1754. Hume's *History of England.*
1756. Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful.*
1756–1763. Seven Years' War. (In America called the French and Indian War.)
1759. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy.*
1760–1820. George III.
1765. The Stamp Act.
1766. Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield.*
1769. *Letters of Junius.*
1770. Goldsmith's *Deserted Village.*
1773. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer.*
1775. Battle of Lexington. Sheridan's *Rivals.*
1776. Declaration of Independence. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*
1777. Sheridan's *School for Scandal.*
1783. Peace with America.

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

(1) MACAULAY

Adams, Charles : *Life Sketches of Macaulay.*
Arnold, M. : *Mixed Essays.*

Bagehot: *Estimate of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen.*
Gladstone: *Gleanings of Past Years.*
Jebb: *Lecture on Macaulay.*
Jones, C. H.: *Life of Lord Macaulay.*
Minto: *Manual of English Prose Literature.*
Morison: *Macaulay* (English Men of Letters Series).
Morley: *English Literature in the Reign of Victoria*, Ch. VII.
Stephen: *Hours in a Library*, Third Series.
Taine: *English Literature*, Bk. V., Ch. III.
Trevelyan: *Life and Letters of Macaulay.* 2 Volumes.
Whipple: *Essays* and *Reviews.*

(2) JOHNSON AND HIS PERIOD

Boswell: *Life of Johnson.* (The best edition is that of G. Birkbeck Hill.)
Carlyle: *Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson.* (Extracts are given in the Appendix.)
D'Arblay, Mme.: *Diary and Letters* and *Early Journals.*
Gosse: *History of Eighteenth Century Literature.*
Grant: *Johnson.* (Great Writers Series.)
Green: *Short History of the English People.*
Hawkins: *Life of Johnson.*
Hill, G. B.: *Dr. Johnson, his Friends and his Critics.*
Lecky: *History of England in the Eighteenth Century.*
Macaulay: *Essays* on *Addison*, *Walpole*, *Earl of Chatham*, *Goldsmith*, *Madame d'Arblay*, and *Croker's Boswell.* (Extracts from the one last named are given in the Appendix.)
Minto: *Manual of English Prose Literature.*

Nichol: *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century.*
Piozzi, Mrs.: *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson.*
Scoone: *Four Centuries of English Letters.* (This contains in part the correspondence of Johnson and Mrs. Thrale.)
Stephen: *Johnson* (English men of Letters Series); *Hours in a Library; History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.*
Thackeray: *English Humorists* and *The Four Georges.*

VI. NOTE ON METHODS OF STUDY

It is impossible to lay down any method of study for this work which would suit even the majority of teachers or classes. Every teacher of English who is worth anything will have his own method of imbuing his pupils with a knowledge and love of the master works of our literature. The main point is to make the study interesting. A dry method, though it may be scholarly and thorough, with secondary school pupils at least, often defeats its own end. It makes no lasting impression. All the average pupil acquires is an extreme dislike for our classic literature. I well remember with what diabolical glee I burnt my Virgil when its study was completed — that Virgil which, in after years, I read with intense delight.

Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* is such a good narrative, so clearly and vivaciously told, that the pupils, if they are not at first bothered with technical points of style, will read it through with much pleasure. Those notes which give extracts from Boswell and other authorities on Johnson, and characteristic

bits of Johnson's own writings, may be used to increase the interest. By no means should the pupils be required to *learn* them. Then some of the extracts from Macaulay's and Carlyle's essays on Croker's *Boswell* given in the Appendix may be employed to heighten the interest and to lead the pupils from Macaulay's vivid but superficial picture to Carlyle's deeper and more sympathetic insight. Johnson's place in English literary history may be studied by means of the admirable passage from Leslie Stephen in the Appendix, the notes which refer to contemporary writers, and some of the extracts from Carlyle. The chronological table may also be found of value here.

As for the study of Macaulay's style, much will depend upon the judgment of the teacher and the capacity of the class. A general criticism of his style is given in the biographical sketch of Macaulay in the Introduction. Every English teacher should be familiar with Minto's *Manual of English Prose Literature*, and should give his pupils as much of this as he thinks they can acquire. Single paragraphs of the *Life of Johnson* may be selected for intensive study ; and much interest may be aroused by a comparative study of Macaulay's and Carlyle's method of treating the same subject. In this way dry technicalities may be made quite exciting. The pupils may also be required to imitate Macaulay's style in written reports of investigations suggested by the literary and historical references given in the notes. But, after all, everything depends on the teacher. He will be either a taskmaster or an inspiration.

MACAULAY'S ESSAY ON SAMUEL JOHNSON

SAMUEL JOHNSON

(*Encyclopædia Britannica*, December, 1856)

Samuel Johnson, one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate of Lichfield,° and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire° thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political sympathy. He was a zealous churchman,° and, though he had qualified himself for municipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns in possession,° was to the last a Jacobite° in heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, Samuel was born on the 18th of September, 1709. In the child the physical,

intellectual, and moral peculiarities which afterwards distinguished the man were plainly discernible; great muscular strength accompanied by much awkwardness and many infirmities; great quickness of parts, with a morbid propensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe that the royal touch° was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain.° The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye; and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he

resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge in such a way: but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek; for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic poetry and eloquence.° But he had left school a good Latinist, and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan° delicacy of taste, which is the boast of the great public schools of England,° he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers, who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton. He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning.° Once, while searching for some apples, he found a huge folio volume of Petrarch's works.° The name excited his curiosity, and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compo-

sitions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

2 While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined: his debts increased: it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university°; but a wealthy neighbour offered assistance; and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College,° Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory, but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius;° and one of the most learned among them declared, that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

3 At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. He was poor, even to raggedness; and his

appearance excited a mirth and a pity, which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ Church° by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner,° panting for one-and-twenty, could have treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendency. In every mutiny against the discipline of the college he was the ringleader.° Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements.° He had early made himself known by turning Pope's *Messiah*° into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian;° but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of

Arts°: but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731, he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

His life, during the thirty years which followed, was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He had become an incurable hypochondriac. He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills.° His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner

table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post on the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit suicide. He was sick of life; but he was afraid of death; and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection;

for his religion° partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium: they reached him refracted, dulled and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.°

6 With such infirmities of body and of mind, this celebrated man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland countries. At Lichfield, his birth-place and his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey, a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley, registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese, a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronising the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners, and squalid garb, moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar school°

in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia.° He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian,° with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse; but subscriptions did not come in; and the volume never appeared.

While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels.° To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty,° as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful, and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned can-

not be doubted; for she was as poor as himself.° She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son.° The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manner; and when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, "Pretty creature°!"

His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Titty well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick,° who was one of the pupils, used, many years later, to throw the best company of

London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of *Irene*° in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

Never, since literature became a calling in England, had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state.° It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun

to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson,° whose *Seasons* were in every library, such an author as Fielding,° whose *Pasquin* had had a greater run than any drama since *The Beggar's Opera*,° was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot,° and carry trunks." Nor was the advice bad, for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which

he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey I shall love him." At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpenny worth of meat, and a pennyworth of bread, at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sate down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries° and *Alamode* beefshops, was far from delicate.

Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but made him rude even to ferocity.° Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness.° He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne,° the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.°

About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave, an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.° That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only

periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was, indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called *Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput.*° France was Blefuscu: London was Mildendo: pounds were sprugs: the Duke of Newcastle was the Nardac Secretary of State: Lord Hardwicke° was the Hurgo Hickrad; and William Pulteney° was Wingul Pulnub. To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory, not from rational conviction — for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another — but from mere passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against the Montagues,° or the Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens.° In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan

when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three he had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell° preach at Lichfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest.° Charles II. and James II.° were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud,° a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden° deserved no more honourable name than that of "the zealot of rebellion." Even the ship money,° condemned not less decidedly by Falkland° and Clarendon° than by the bitterest Roundheads,° Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a government, the mildest that had ever been known in the world, under a government

which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action, he fancied that he was a slave; he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears,° whipped at the cart's tail, and flung into a noisome dungeon to die. He hated dissenters° and stockjobbers, the excise and the army, septennial parliaments, and continental connections. He long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion.° It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the *Magazine*. But Johnson long afterwards owned that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition.

A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which Juvenal° had described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's° *Satires* and *Epistles* had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold, and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.

Johnson's *London*° appeared without his name in May, 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and vigorous poem: but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower established reputations ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of

literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of *London*. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar school for the poor young poet. The attempt failed°; and Johnson remained a bookseller's hack.

It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and index makers.° Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse,° who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his blanket, who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober, and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk; Hoole,° surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the

board where he sate cross-legged; and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar,° who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted was Richard Savage,° an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribands in Saint James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of iron on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden° in warm weather, and, in cold weather, as near as he could get to the furnace

of a glass house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the prime minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the West of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and, in 1743, died, penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared widely different from the catchpenny lives of eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street.° The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography

existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

The *Life of Savage* was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton° pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a *Dictionary of the English Language*, in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

The prospectus of the *Dictionary* he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield.° Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland,

at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage° with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant.° During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.°

Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his Dictionary by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, an excellent imitation of the Tenth

Satire of Juvenal. It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey° is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus,° the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned too that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal° must yield to Johnson's Charles°; and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life° must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.°

For the copyright of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on

the stage. His pupil, David Garrick, had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields,° had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre.° The relation between him and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw with more envy than became so great a man the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathised with each other on so many points on which they sympathised with

nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought *Irene* out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened, with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* closely resemble the versification of *Irene*.° The poet, however, cleared, by his benefit nights,° and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

About a year after the representation of *Irene*, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the

Tatler,° and by the still more brilliant success of the *Spectator*. A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to rival Addison. The *Lay Monastery*, the *Censor*, the *Freethinker*, the *Plain Dealer*, the *Champion*, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the *Spectator* appeared the first number of the *Rambler*. From March, 1750, to March, 1752, this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

From the first the *Rambler* was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson,° when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior to the *Spectator*. Young° and Hartley° expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Dodington,° among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Dodington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederic,° two of His Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a

gracious message to the printing office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House. But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

By the public the *Rambler* was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted they became popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue.° The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent

brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter papers. On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger,° his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster° and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

The last *Rambler* was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost broken-hearted. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a

silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude.° But all his affection had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings,° and witty as Lady Mary.° Her opinion of his writings° was more important to him than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre, or the judgment of the *Monthly Review*.° The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his *Dictionary*. She was gone; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the *Dictionary* was at length complete.

It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the

Ramblers had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called *The World*, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of *The World*, the *Dictionary* was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a Dictator,° nay, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter° written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The *Dictionary* came forth without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke,° never could read that passage without tears.

The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full jus-

tice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's *Dictionary* was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was indeed the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines, and philosophers are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist. He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic language except English, which indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language°; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.°

The *Dictionary*, though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses, and that he was twice

indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson. It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his *Dictionary*. He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakspeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names and laid down their money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the *Literary Magazine*. Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's° *Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*.

In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled the *Idler*. During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated, while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The *Idler* may be described as a second part of the *Rambler*, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

While Johnson was busy with his *Idlers*, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain; for the book was *Rasselas*.°

The success of *Rasselas* was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish° must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the Vanity of Human Wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. The *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review*° took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant, who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of

six, and who could not make a waiting woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

About the plan of *Rasselas* little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakspeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley° talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton° discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from Bruce's *Travels*.° But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages, ignorant of

their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke,° and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox° or Mrs. Sheridan,° transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ball-rooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of each other. Such," says Rasselas, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been, and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet who made Hector quote Aristotle,° and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little

disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate *Dictionary* he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party. The excise, which was a favourite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse° that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal° by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade." A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George the Third had ascended the throne; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous.° Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks° were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute,° who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron

of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted. This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's officer.°

One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakspeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years: and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he

lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter Eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter, 1765, came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane,° and had actually gone himself, with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill,° who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics

to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This terrible word proved effectual; and in October, 1765, appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakspeare.

37 This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had during many years observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius.° Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's° admirable examination of Hamlet. But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name° a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic. The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his Prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had under-

taken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakspeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the *English Dictionary* there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakspeare and Ben.° Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus° and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakspeare, without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher.° His detractors were

noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience, and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won. He was honoured by the University of Oxford with a Doctor's degree,° by the Royal Academy° with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775, Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the *Life of Savage* and on *Rasselas*.

But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious

anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of the *Rambler*. But in his talk there were no pompous triads, and little more than a fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*. All was simplicity, ease, and vigour. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry, in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject, on a fellow-passenger in a stage coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating-house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as

when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club,° which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook.° Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith° was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds° of the arts, Burke of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon,° the greatest historian, and Jones,° the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton,° distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity

of his life; and Topham Beauclerk,° renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's club.

Among the members of this celebrated body was one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell,° a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature

had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes,° and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitfield,° and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as, "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water drinker° and Boswell was a winebibber, and indeed little better than a habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion, in which he said things which the

small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During these visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto note books with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials, out of which was afterwards constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connection less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connection with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert, young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do

or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales° became acquainted with Johnson, and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilised society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and with adversity. In a vulgar hack writer such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue, their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark,° and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common.° A large part of every year he passed in those abodes, abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which

he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian tale called "the endearing elegance of female friendship." Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise was wanting to his sick-room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry, which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names, now obsolete, of Buck and Macaroni. It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath,° and sometimes to Brighton, once to Wales, and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street.° In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed

with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinage, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment Johnson had placed an old lady named Williams,° whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them,

and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern.° And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly and Levett continued to torment him and to live upon him.°

The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides, and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell impor-

tuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August, 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region,° sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy poneys which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his Journey to the Hebrides was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been

received in every part of Scotland. It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual,° or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian.° But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield° at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country with libels much more dishonourable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five-shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eyed; another for being a pensioner: a third informed the world that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson,° whose *Fingal* had been proved in the *Journey* to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only

effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery° in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

42 Of other assailants Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary, because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry; and when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons° did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance

by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter.

"Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum."°

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apophthegm of Bentley,° that no man was ever written down but by himself.

Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the Journey to the Hebrides, Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a

certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon and Stockdale. But his *Taxation no Tyranny*° was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could detect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the *Dictionary* and the *Rambler* were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the

old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote *Rasselas* in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the colonies and the mother country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan°; as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson.° Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

On Easter Eve, 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had

some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley° downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration° was unrivalled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books, and partly from sources which had long been closed; from old Grub Street traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley, who had conversed with the wits of Button°; Cibber,° who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery,° who had been admitted to the society of Swift°; and Savage, who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope.° The biographer therefore sate down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets,

swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

The *Lives of the Poets* are, on the whole, the best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They therefore generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

Savage's *Life* Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that life, will turn to the other lives will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate

composition was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the Journey to the Hebrides, and in the *Lives of the Poets* is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

Among the *Lives* the best are perhaps those of Cowley, Dryden,° and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.°

This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure: but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone° computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first

English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson° received four thousand five hundred pounds for the *History of Charles V.*; and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the *History of Charles V.* is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the *Lives of the Poets.*

Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world, tears far more bitter

than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable, and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humour. But he was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia,° in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner towards him changed. She was sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham: she never pressed him to return; and, if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a wel-

come guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left for ever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June, 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman, whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life, had married an Italian fiddler; that all London was crying shame upon her; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron° and the two pictures° in *Hamlet*. He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the

fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and the hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mont Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated had ceased to exist.

He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described° in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his *Idlers* seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples, but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard, and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year, but this hope was disappointed, and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That

winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with deep emotion. Windham° sate much in the sick-room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant to watch at night by the bed. Frances Burney,° whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton, whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December, 1784. He was laid, a week later, in

Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian, — Cowley and Denham,° Dryden and Congreve,° Gay,° Prior,° and Addison.

Since his death the popularity of his works — the *Lives of the Poets*, and, perhaps, the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, excepted — has greatly diminished. His *Dictionary* has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his *Rambler* or his *Idler* is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of *Rasselas* has grown somewhat dim. But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with

what he would himself have called the anfractuosities of his intellect and of his temper, serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

NOTES

Page 1, line 4. **Lichfield.** An ancient Episcopal city of Staffordshire, one of the west midland counties of England. It is situated 115 miles northwest of London.

9. **Worcestershire.** The county lying directly south of Staffordshire.

13. **Churchman.** A member of the Established Church of England, — the American branch of which is the Protestant Episcopal Church. Members of other religious bodies — Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, etc. — were styled Nonconformists or Dissenters. As the sovereign appoints through his ministers the bishops of the Church of England, who have seats in the House of Lords, "churchmanship" in former times went hand in hand with the support of the royal authority. At present, however, as the House of Commons has control of all royal appointments, and the bishops may belong to either party, this distinction has passed away.

15. **Sovereigns in possession.** William III. and Mary, acknowledged sovereigns by the "Declaration of Rights," after the expulsion of James II., the preceding year; Anne, who succeeded them in 1702, by virtue of the same ordinance; and the monarchs of the House of Brunswick, who took the throne through the "Act of Settlement" of 1701. These acts established the power of the English people to decide, through their representatives, which branch of the royal family should rule.

15. **Jacobite.** From "Jacobus," the Latin form of "James." A supporter of the exiled James II, and afterwards of his son James, and grandson, Charles, who were respectively styled by the opposing party, the "Old Pretender" and the "Young

Pretender." A Jacobite believed in strict hereditary succession; in the divine right of kings; and that no king, whatever his misconduct, could forfeit his throne.

P. 2, l. 10. **The royal touch.** The vulgar English name for scrofula, "the king's evil," is derived from the long-cherished belief that it could be healed by the royal touch. In this was supposed to inhere some of the "Grace of God" which gave the right of sovereignty to true kings. Old historians assert that multitudes of patients were cured by this treatment. Queen Anne was the last English sovereign who touched for the king's evil. Henry VII. introduced the practice of presenting the patient with a small gold coin.

17. **Her hand was applied in vain.** Perhaps the Jacobitism of Johnson's parents prevented the usual cure. "The old Jacobites considered that this power did not descend to Mary, William, or Anne, as they did not possess a full hereditary title; or, in other words, did not rule by divine right. The kings of the house of Brunswick have, we believe, never put this power to the proof; and the office for the ceremony which appeared in our liturgy as late as 1719, has been silently omitted. The exiled princes of the house of Stuart are supposed to have inherited this virtue. . . . When Prince Charles Edward was at Holyroodhouse in Oct., 1745, he, although only claiming to be Prince of Wales and regent, touched a female child for the king's evil, who in twenty-one days is said to have been perfectly cured." — *The English Cyclopædia.*

P. 3, l. 11. **Attic poetry and eloquence** refers to the masterpieces of the great orators and dramatists of Athens, the chief city of ancient Greece.

15. **Augustan** refers to the Roman emperor, Augustus

Cæsar. During his reign (27 B.C.–14 A.D.) Latin literature reached its highest point of technical excellence in the works of Horace, Livy, Ovid, and Virgil.

17. **The great public schools of England**, the best known of which are Eton and Rugby, are not supported by taxation like our public schools, but by endowments and the tuition of pupils. The classes are called "forms," the "sixth" being the highest. Read *Tom Brown's School Days*, by Thomas Hughes, an interesting story of life at Rugby. English school life has changed but little during the last two or three centuries.

21. **The great restorers of learning.** One of the chief results of the Crusades was an awakening and broadening of the thought of western Europe. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries many Italian scholars gave themselves up to the enthusiastic study of Greek and Roman literature, which had been practically neglected during the "Dark Ages." This movement is known as the Revival of Learning. Among the prominent restorers of learning were Petrarch, Boccaccio, Poggio, Æneas Sylvius, Pope Nicholas V.; and, outside of Italy, Erasmus, in Flanders; Casaubon and the Scaligers, in France; and Sir Thomas More, in England. Read George Eliot's *Romola*, a novel whose scene is laid in Florence at the close of the fifteenth century.

23. **Petrarch's works.** Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374) was the greatest scholar of his day, and the first of modern writers to write really classical Latin, besides being one of the first of western Europeans to undertake the study of Greek literature. He left numerous works in Latin prose and verse, but his fame rests on his exquisite sonnets and canzonets in the Italian vernacular, expressing his love for the beautiful Laura

de Sade. See Symonds's *Renaissance in Italy, Italian Literature*, Part I., Ch. II., p. 84.

P. 4, l. 11. **At either university.** In Johnson's time England had two universities: Oxford, supposed to have been founded by Alfred the Great in the ninth century, but certainly in existence before the Norman Conquest; and Cambridge, which originated in a monastic school established 1110. In the nineteenth century three new universities were founded, — London, Durham, and Victoria.

14. **Pembroke College.** Founded 1620. One of the nineteen colleges which composed the University of Oxford in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century two new colleges were added. Read *Tom Brown at Oxford*, by Thomas Hughes; and *Verdant Green*, by Cuthbert Bede.

21. **Macrobius.** A Latin grammarian of the fifth century A.D. His works contain many valuable historical, mythological, and critical observations, and were much read during the Middle Ages. The "Nonnes Preeste" in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* thus refers to him: —

> "Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
> In Affrick of the worthy Cipioun,
> Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
> Warninge of thinges that men after seen."

P. 5, l. 3. **Christ Church.** One of the most fashionable of the Oxford colleges. Founded by Cardinal Wolsey in 1526.

9. **Gentleman commoner.** A student of "gentle" (*i.e.* aristocratic) birth, who pays for his commons (meals in the college hall), his room, and college fees; as distinguished from a student supported by a "foundation" or scholarship. In Johnson's time special privileges were enjoyed by the sons of noblemen.

17. **The ringleader.** This passage is a good example of Macaulay's tendency to exaggerate for the sake of picturesque effect. It is founded on the following from Boswell's *Life of Johnson:* "I have heard from some of his contemporaries that he was generally seen lounging at the college gate, with a circle of young students round him whom he was entertaining with wit, and keeping from their studies, if not spiriting them up to rebellion against the College discipline, which in his maturer years he so much extolled." Note how in retelling the story Macaulay, by his choice of words, gives it a much higher color. There is, however, no authority for "*every* mutiny."

19. **Abilities and acquirements.** Dr. Adams said, "I was his nominal tutor; but he was above my mark." — *Boswell.*

20. **Pope's "Messiah."** Alexander Pope (1688–1744) dominated English verse through nearly all of the eighteenth century. He is deficient in originality and poetic elevation; but has not been surpassed as a polished versifier, satirist, and moralizer in rhyme. Next to Shakespeare he is the most quoted of English writers. His best work is the *Essay on Man.*

22. **Virgilian.** The poems of Publius Virgilius Maro (70–19 B.C.), the *Æneid*, the *Eclogues*, and the *Georgics*, are the most polished examples of Latin versification.

P. 6. l. 1. **Bachelor of Arts.** "B.A.", the first degree given to a student at his graduation. The next degree is "M.A.," or Master of Arts. The third is Doctor — of Divinity, Laws, or Philosophy; "D.D., L.L.D., Ph.D."

23. **Absolving felons and setting aside wills.** Defendants are acquitted and wills are set aside by the law courts upon proof of insanity. Note how Macaulay creates a powerful picture by stating special incidents, and how by the use of the

word "would" (see page 7, line 1), he gives the impression that these were habitual occurrences.

P. 8, l. 1. **His religion.** Although Johnson was undoubtedly a confirmed hypochondriac, yet that his religion was a great help and comfort to him is shown by numerous letters and conversations reported by Boswell. The following prayer, composed and offered up by Johnson on undertaking the *Rambler*, is characteristic: —

"Almighty God, the Giver of all good things, without whose help all labor is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is folly; grant I beseech Thee, that in this my undertaking, thy Holy Spirit may not be withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation of myself and others: Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of thy son Jesus Christ. Amen." — Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

8. **Too dim to cheer him.** "Johnson as drawn by Boswell is too 'awful, melancholy, and venerable.' Hawkins (*Life*, p. 258) says, that 'in the talent of humour there hardly ever was Johnson's equal, except perhaps among the old comedians.' Murphy writes (*Life*, p. 139): 'Johnson was surprised to be told, but it is certainly true, that with great powers of mind, wit and humour were his shining talents.' Mrs. Piozzi confirms this. 'Mr. Murphy,' she writes (*Anecdotes*, p. 205), 'always said he was incomparable at buffoonery.' She adds (p. 298): 'He would laugh at a stroke of genuine humour, or sudden sally of odd absurdity as heartily and freely as I ever yet saw any man; and, though the jest was often such as few felt besides himself, yet his laugh was irresistible, and was observed immediately to produce that of the company, not merely from the notion that it was proper to laugh when he did, but from

lack of power to forbear it.' Miss Burney records: 'Dr. Johnson has more fun and comical humour, and love of nonsense about him than almost anybody I ever saw.'" — G. Birkbeck Hill's *Boswell*, Vol. II., p. 261, *note.* Boswell himself says: "I passed many hours with him on the 17th [May, 1775] of which I find all my memorial is 'much laughing.' It should seem that he had that day been in a humour for jocularity and merriment, and upon such occasions I never knew a man laugh more heartily. Johnson's laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner. It was a kind of good humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drolly enough: 'He laughs like a rhinoceros.'"

25. **Usher of a grammar school.** In England "grammar schools" are those in which Latin and Greek are "grammatically taught." An "usher" is a subordinate teacher.

P. 9, l. 7. **A Latin book about Abyssinia.** *Voyage to Abyssinia*, by Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit. For this work Johnson received five guineas (about $25), and he did not consider himself ill paid.

9. **Politian.** Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) occupies a foremost place in the "Revival of Learning" in virtue of his vigor and originality. He was a close friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, the greatest ruler of Florence; and his poems, both in Latin and Italian, are of very high merit.

19. **Queensberrys and Lepels.** Leading families of the British nobility.

23. **His Titty.** Macaulay has changed the nickname to make it more ridiculous. According to Boswell, Johnson called her Tetty or Tetsey, a provincial nickname for Elizabeth, and similar to Betty or Betsey.

P. 10, l. 1. **As poor as himself.** Another of Macaulay's

exaggerations. "The author of the *Life and Memoirs of Dr. Johnson* says: 'Mrs. Porter's husband died insolvent, but her settlement was secured. She brought her second husband seven or eight hundred pounds, a great part of which was expended in fitting up a house for a boarding school.' . . . After nearly twenty months of married life, when he went to London, 'he had,' Boswell says, 'a little money.' It was not till a year later that he began to write for *The Gentleman's Magazine*. If Mrs. Johnson had not money, how did she and her husband live from July, 1735, to the spring of 1738? It could scarcely have been on the profits made from their school." — Hill's *Boswell*, Vol. I., p. 95, *note* 3.

4. **A suitor who might have been her son.** Contrast with Macaulay's picture the following from Carlyle's *Essay* on *Boswell's Life of Johnson*: —

"Finally, the choicest terrestrial good: a Friend, who will be Wife to him! Johnson's marriage with the good Widow Porter has been treated with ridicule by many mortals, who apparently had no understanding thereof. That the purblind, seamy-faced Wild-man, stalking lonely, woe-stricken, like some Irish Gallowglass with peeled club, whose speech no man knew, whose look all men both laughed at and shuddered at, should find any brave female heart to acknowledge, at first sight and hearing of him, 'This is the most sensible man I ever met with;' and then, with generous courage, to take him to itself, and say, 'Be thou mine; be thou warmed here, and thawed to life!'—in all this, in the kind Widow's love and pity for him, in Johnson's love and gratitude, there is actually no matter for ridicule. Their wedded life, as is the common lot, was made up of drizzle and dry weather; but innocence and worth dwelt in it; and, when death had ended it, a certain sacredness: Johnson's deathless affection for his Tetty was always venerable and noble."

13. **"Pretty creature!"** Mrs. Thrale says: "The picture I found of her at Lichfield was very pretty, and her daughter said it was like. Mr. Johnson has told me that her hair was eminently beautiful, quite blonde like that of a baby."—Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 148. In Johnson's private memoranda of his tour in France, fourteen years after his wife's death, is the following: "The sight of palaces, and other great buildings, leaves no very distinct images unless to those who talk of them. As I entered, my wife was in my mind; she would have been pleased. Having now nobody to please, I am little pleased."

24. **David Garrick** (1716–1779) was the greatest of all English actors. He did more than any one else to restore Shakespeare's plays to the English stage. As an actor, he was equally at home in the highest poetry of tragedy and the lowest jests of farce. Read Goldsmith's poem *Retaliation* for a capital sketch of his character. In it occurs these often quoted lines,—

> "On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
> 'Twas only that, when he was off, he was acting."

Garrick was the source of all the ridicule heaped upon Mrs. Johnson. Percy says, "As Johnson kept Garrick much in awe when present, David, when his back was turned, repaid his restraint with ridicule of him and his Dulcinea, which should be read with much abatement."

P. 11, l. 6. **Irene.** The story of the play deals with the love of Mahomet the Great, the Turkish conqueror of Constantinople, for a beautiful Greek captive. Read *The Prince of India*, by Lew Wallace, for this tale.

18. **Secretary of state.** See Appendix, p. 126 and p. 157.

P. 12, l. 8. **Thomson**, James (1700–1748). The first English poet to take nature for his subject. Besides the *Seasons*,

his best-known works are the *Castle of Indolence* and the song *Rule Brittania.*

9. **Fielding,** Henry (1707–1754). The greatest English novelist of the eighteenth century; also a playwright of no mean ability. Two of his novels, *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews*, although disfigured by the coarseness common to his age, are among the masterpieces of English fiction.

10. **The Beggar's Opera**, by John Gay (1685–1732), was the most successful dramatic piece produced in England during the first half of the eighteenth century. The characters are all taken from low life, and the hero is a highwayman; but it is a scathing satire on the fashionable society of the day. It appeared in 1726, and is still occasionally represented. The best part is the songs. From one of these come the often quoted lines,—

> "How happy could I be with either,
> Were t'other dear charmer away."

20. **Porter's knot.** "A kind of double shoulder-pad, with a loop passing round the forehead; the whole roughly resembling a horse-collar, used by London market porters for carrying their burdens." — Cassell's *Encyclopedic Dictionary.* "Perhaps originally a rope tied or knotted into a loop." — Murray's *Dictionary.*

P. 13, l. 12. **Drury Lane.** A street in the heart of London. In the seventeenth century it had been a fashionable residence district; but in Johnson's time it was ceasing to be respectable.

25. **Subterranean ordinaries.** Cheap eating-houses situated in cellars. **Alamode beef** was "scraps and remainders of beef boiled down into a thick soup or stew." — Murray's *Dictionary.*

The ancient hare and the rancid meat pie are single instances which Macaulay magnifies into habitual occurrences by the use of the word "whenever." There are many authentic anecdotes, reported by Boswell and others, to show that Johnson, though a voracious eater, fully appreciated good cooking. Boswell, who dined with him, found the meal excellent though plain; and Hawkins speaks of "his not inelegant dinners."

P. 14, l. 8. **Rude even to ferocity.** "Once Johnson is said to have taken up a chair at the theatre, upon which a man had seated himself during his temporary absence, and to have tossed it and its occupant bodily into the pit."—Leslie Stephen's *Life of Johnson.*

12. **Societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness.** "To obviate all the reflections which have gone round the world to Johnson's prejudice, by applying to him the epithet of a bear, let me impress upon my readers a just and happy saying of my friend Goldsmith, who knew him well, 'Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner; but no man alive has a more tender heart. *He has nothing of the bear but his skin.*'" —Boswell's *Life of Johnson.* "Reynolds said: 'Johnson had one virtue which I hold one of the most difficult to practise. After the heat of contest was over, if he had been informed that his antagonist resented his rudeness; he was the first to seek after a reconciliation.' Johnson wrote to Dr. Taylor in 1756: 'When I am musing alone, I feel a pang for every moment that any human being has by my peevishness or obstinacy spent in uneasiness.'"—Hill's *Boswell*, Vol. II., p. 256, *note.*

15. **Osborne.** "It has been confidently related, with many embellishments, that Johnson one day knocked Osborne down in his shop, with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. The

simple truth I had from Johnson himself. 'Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him. But it was not in his shop: it was in my own chamber.'" — *Boswell.*

"There is nothing to tell, dearest lady, but that he was insolent and I beat him, and that he was a blockhead and told of it, which I should never have done. . . . I have beat many a fellow, but the rest had the wit to hold their tongues." — Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes of Johnson*, p. 233.

19. **Harleian Library.** The famous library collected by Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, which had been purchased by Osborne. Johnson wrote the introduction to the catalogue, and the Latin accounts of the books.

24. **The Gentleman's Magazine**, originated by Edward Cave in January, 1731, is still in existence. Cave used the *nom de plume* "Sylvanus Urban" as editor; and the title is the first application of the word "magazine" to a periodical. Johnson had a high opinion of Cave, whose life he afterward wrote. The story is told, that, at some of the dinners Cave gave his contributors, a plate was passed to Johnson, who was seated behind a screen, as his clothes were too ragged to permit his appearing at table.

P. 15, l. 8. **Senate of Lilliput.** Every one should read *Gulliver's Voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag*, by Swift. The stories are so well told that they remain deeply interesting to this day though the objects of Swift's merciless satire are well-nigh forgotten. "Blefuscu," "Mildendo," "sprugs," and "Nardac" are terms taken from the *Voyages*. Johnson wrote the debates from November, 1740, to February, 1743. He told Boswell that "as soon as he found they were thought genuine he determined he would write no more of them, 'for he would not be accessory

to the propagation of a falsehood.'" It is likely that this tenderness of conscience cost Cave a good deal. Hawkins writes that, while Johnson composed the Debates, the sale of the *Magazine* increased from ten to fifteen thousand copies a month.

11. **Lord Hardwicke.** Philip Yorke (1690–1764) was one of the strongest supporters of Sir Robert Walpole, who made him Lord Chancellor in 1733. See Green's *History of the English People*, Ch. IX., Sec. X. Hickrad is a caricature of Lord Hardwicke's name.

12. **William Pulteney**, Earl of Bath (1684–1764), was for some time the chief opponent of Sir Robert Walpole. He was the leader of a faction that called itself "The Patriots." The Speaker of the House of Commons described him as "having the most popular parts for public speaking of any great man he ever knew." A contemporary epigram says of him, —

> ". . . Billy, of all Bob's foes,
> The wittiest in verse and prose."

22. **Capulets** and **Montagues** were the two families whose feud forms the background of Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet.*

23. **The Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens.** In the later days of the Roman Empire, the chariot races in the hippodrome at Constantinople were the chief amusement of the degenerate populace, which divided into factions named from the colors worn by the drivers. The animosities of these factions sometimes led to serious riots, and even to incendiarism and massacre. An interesting account is in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Ch. XL., Sec. II.

P. 16, l. 2. **Sacheverell** was a "High Church," Tory clergy-

man, of mediocre ability, who gained a place in the history of England by two sermons delivered in 1709. In these he attacked the principles of the revolution of 1688, asserted the doctrine of non-resistance to kings, and decried the "Act of Toleration." The ministry foolishly prosecuted him, and the public excitement which this aroused led to the overthrow of the Whig party, and the fall of the Duke of Marlborough. Read Green's *History of the English People*, Ch. IX., Sec. IX.

13. **Tom Tempest** is a character in No. 10 of the *Idler*. Johnson describes him as a man "of integrity, where no factious interest is to be promoted;" and a "lover of truth," when not "heated with political debate." And then continues: —

"*Tom Tempest* is a steady friend of the house of *Stuart*. He can recount the prodigies that have appeared in the sky, and the calamities that have afflicted the nation every year from the Revolution; and is of opinion, that, if the exiled family had continued to reign, there would have been neither worms in our ships nor caterpillars in our trees. He wonders that the nation was not awakened by the hard frost to a revocation of the true king, and is hourly afraid that the whole island may be lost in the sea. He believes that King *William* burned *Whitehall* that he might steal the furniture; and that *Tillotson* died an Atheist. Of Queen *Anne* he speaks with more tenderness; owns that she meant well, and can tell by whom and why she was poisoned. In the succeeding reigns all has been corruption, malice, and design. He believes that nothing ill has ever happened for these forty years by chance or errour; he holds that the battle of *Dettingen* was won by mistake and that of *Fontenoy* lost by contract; that the *Victory* was sunk by a private order; that *Cornhill* was fired by emissaries of the *Council;* and that the arch of *Westminster-bridge* was so contrived as to sink on purpose, that the Nation might be put to charge. He

considers the new road to *Islington* as an encroachment on liberty, and often asserts that broad wheels will be the ruin of *England*."

A man who can jest in this comical fashion about the extremists of his own party, can hardly be the bigot that Macaulay portrays so vividly.

13. **Charles II.** (1660–1685) and **James II.** (1685–1688). The last two reigning sovereigns of the male line of the Stuarts; the former noted for his profligacy, the latter for his bigotry. Read Green's *History*, Ch. IX., Sec. III., and Sec. VI.

14. **Laud**, William, Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I., and leader in the oppression of the Puritans. He was executed by ordinance of Parliament, January 10, 1644–1645. Macaulay, whose Whig prejudices were as strong as Johnson's Tory prepossessions, is unjust to Laud, who was a man of great mental attainments. Green, in his *History*, Ch. VIII., Sec. IV., gives an impartial view of the great prelate.

18. **Hampden**, John (1594–1643). One of the chief opponents of the arbitrary measures by which Charles I. endeavored to make the English monarchy absolute. See Green's *History*, Ch. VIII., Secs. III. and V.

20. **Ship money.** One of the means by which Charles tried to raise money in 1634, without calling a parliament. Hampden was foremost in the opposition to this measure. See Green's *History*, Ch. VIII., Sec. V.

21. **Falkland.** Lucius Cary, Viscount of (1610–1643). In the beginning of his career he was distinguished by his zeal for Parliament and the constitution of his country; but, later, offended by what he considered the excesses of the popular party, he took sides with Charles I. He was killed in the

Civil War. See Green's *History*, Ch. XIII., Sec. VI., and Ch. IX., Sec. I.

22. **Clarendon.** Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1608–1674), like Falkland, took at first the side of Parliament; but at the outbreak of the Civil War, joined the king. At the Restoration he was made Lord High Chancellor of England. His daughter Anne became the wife of the Duke of York, afterwards James II., and the mother of Mary and Anne, queens of England. Why is Macaulay's use of the names of Falkland and Clarendon in this instance unfair?

22. **Roundheads.** A term of ridicule applied by the royalists to the supporters of Parliament against Charles I., on account of the fashion they had adopted of wearing the hair closely cut. The "Cavaliers," as the king's adherents were called, wore long flowing curls.

P. 17, l. 7. **Mangled with the shears.** Criminals frequently had nose and ears cut off in "the good old times."

9. **Dissenters**, etc. The Whig party, which held almost uninterrupted power from 1688 to 1760, tolerated the Dissenters, favored the mercantile classes, created the national debt, enacted that parliaments should be elected at least every seven years, and made alliances with continental European Powers. The "excise" was an internal tax on liquors first introduced in the Long Parliament in 1643, and increased during the wars with France. It was vehemently opposed by the old-fashioned Tories.

15. **The Great Rebellion.** During the Civil War between Charles I. and Parliament, the Scotch were the first to oppose the king, and when, after his defeat by Cromwell at Naseby, Charles threw himself upon the loyalty of the Scotch army, he

was surrendered by them to Parliament for the sum of £400,000. This was in "payment of all the arears of the subsidies which were owed them for their services in England." As Charles was executed in 1649 by order of Parliament, one may easily understand why the good Tory Johnson held the Scotch responsible for the death of the "Martyr King." See Green's *History*, Ch. VII.

P. 18, l. 6. **Juvenal** and **Horace** were the two greatest Roman satirists. Horace (65–8, B.C.) belonged to the Augustan age, while Juvenal flourished about the end of the first century (60–140 A.D.). They respectively represent the two schools of satire, — that of easy-going ridicule, and that of moral indignation. Horace was a man of the world; and Juvenal, a reformer. Juvenal "uses satire, not as a branch of comedy, which it was to Horace, but as an engine for attacking the brutalities of tyranny, the corruptions of life and taste, the crimes, the follies, and the frenzies of a degenerate state of society. He has great humor of a scornful, austere, and singularly pungent kind, and many noble flashes of high moral poetry. Dryden's translations of five of the satires are among his best works."

10. **Horace.** See preceding note.

18. **Johnson's London.** The following lines give some idea of the character of the poem: —

> "This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
> Slow rises worth by poverty oppressed,
> But here more slow where all are slaves to gold,
> Where looks are merchandise, and smiles are sold,
> Where, won by bribes, by flatterers implored,
> The groom retails the favours of his lord."

P. 19, l. 9. **The attempt failed.** At Pope's suggestion, Lord

Gower used his influence with the authorities of Dublin University to obtain for Johnson the degree of M.A., which the position required. It was well for English literature that Johnson was forced for years yet to support himself by his pen. He was not at all fitted to be a schoolmaster.

17. **Pamphleteers and indexmakers.** Most of the sort of matter which nowadays is published in our multifarious periodicals appeared then in pamphlet form; and the making of indexes to learned works was a common means of support to unknown scholars.

18. **Boyse**, Samuel (1708–1749), a forgotten poet, some of whose lines to the Deity are quoted admiringly by Fielding in *Tom Jones*, Book VII., Ch. I. He was probably one of the most shiftless of the whole breed of "Grub Street poets." He failed to get a good position in Edinburgh, because he would not go out on a rainy day to make his application. Johnson "told how he had once exerted himself for his comrade in misery, and collected enough money by sixpences to get the poet's clothes out of pawn. Two days afterward Boyse had spent the money, and was found in bed covered only with a blanket, through two holes in which he passed his arms to write. Boyse, it appears, when still in this position, would lay out his last half guinea to buy mushrooms and truffles for his last scrap of beef."—Stephen's *Life of Johnson.* (See Appendix, pp. 130–134.)

23. **Hoole.** All we know of him is what Johnson said to Hoole's nephew, John Hoole, the translator of Tasso: "Sir, I knew him; we called him the metaphysical tailor. He was of a club in Old Street with me, and George Psalmanazar, and some others." And then John Hoole spoke of his

uncle's tracing diagrams on his cutting board. — Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

P. 20, l. 2. **George Psalmanazar** was a Frenchman who for a time achieved quite a notoriety in England by pretending to be a native of Formosa and a convert to Christianity. In 1704 he published his *Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa.* "So gross is the forgery that it almost passes belief that it was widely accepted as a true narrative." Later, being stricken by conscience, he made a public confession of his imposture and supported himself for the rest of a long life by translating, etc. Johnson said of him: "He had never seen the close of the life of anyone that he wished so much his own to resemble as that of him, for its purity and devotion." He was asked if he ever contradicted him. "I should as soon," said he, "have thought of contradicting a bishop." When he was asked whether he had mentioned Formosa before him, he said, "he was afraid to mention even China." Johnson used to meet him at an alehouse. "Johnson in an alehouse club, with a metaphysical tailor on one side of him, and an aged writer on the other side of him, 'who spoke English with the city accent and coarsely enough,' and whom he would never venture to contradict, is a Johnson that we cannot easily imagine."— Hill's *Boswell*, Vol. III., Appendix A.

8. **Richard Savage** (1698–1743). His most successful poem was the *Wanderer*, which contains some strong lines, but is now forgotten. In 1727 he killed a man in a tavern brawl, was confined in Newgate (the chief prison of London), and condemned to death. The intercession of the Countess of Hertford with the queen obtained his pardon. Her Majesty afterward gave him an allowance of £50 a year, which he

usually squandered in a week of debauchery. He is remembered now only for his connection with Johnson. Of this intimacy Carlyle writes: "Neither, though Johnson is obscure and poor, need the highest enjoyment of existence, that of heart freely communing with heart, be denied him. Savage and he wander homeless through the streets; without bed, yet not without friendly converse; such another conversation not, it is like, producible in the proudest drawing-room of London. Nor, under the void Night, upon the hard pavement, are their own woes the only topic: nowise; they 'will stand by their country,' they there, the two Backwoodsmen of the Brick Desert!" — *Essay on Boswell's Johnson.*

24. **Covent Garden** (properly Convent Garden) was originally the garden of Westminster Abbey. It is now a square celebrated for its great market of fruit, vegetables, and flowers. In the seventeenth century it was a fashionable quarter of the city.

P. 21, l. 21. **Grub Street.** "The name of a street in London much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called Grub Street." — Johnson's *Dictionary.*

P. 22, l. 10. **Warburton,** William, Bishop of Gloucester (1698–1779). One of the most noted English theologians and philosophical writers.

21. **Earl of Chesterfield** (1694–1773). His famous *Letters to his Son*, which are still widely read, give an excellent picture of the manners and morals of the English aristocracy of the eighteenth century. The character of Sir John Chester in Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* is founded on Lord Chesterfield.

P. 23, l. 3. **Johnson's homage.** The following passage from

Johnson's *Prospectus* is interesting as a contrast to the famous *Letter* (see *note*, p. 31, l. 15) written some years later. "And I may hope, my Lord, that since you, whose authority in our language is so generally acknowledged, have commissioned me to declare my own opinion, I shall be considered as exercising a kind of vicarious jurisdiction; and that the power which might have been denied to my own claim, will be readily allowed me as the delegate of your Lordship."

12. **Ate like a cormorant.** The following passage from the *Letters* is considered to be Chesterfield's description of Johnson:

"... A respectable Hottentot, who throws his meat anywhere but down his throat. This absurd person was not only uncouth in manners and warm in dispute, but behaves in exactly the same way to superiours, equals, and inferiours; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, absurdly to two of them."

16. **Inhospitable door.** Johnson in his *Dictionary* defined "patron" as "commonly a wretch who supports with insolence and is paid with flattery." In later years he said that "Lord Chesterfield was dignified but he was insolent," and that "his manner was exquisitely elegant." And again: "This man I thought had been a lord among wits; but I find he is only a wit among Lords." Johnson always maintained that the "respectable Hottentot" was not meant for him. "Sir," said he, "Lord Chesterfield never saw me eat in his life." But the opinion of Boswell was otherwise.

P. 24, 1. 4. **Wolsey**, Thomas (1471–1530). The great English cardinal and prime minister of Henry VIII. He was disgraced on account of his counsel and conduct in the matter of the divorce of Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon. See Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*, and Green's *History*, Ch. VI., Sec. V.

7. **Sejanus, Ælius.** A Roman knight, to whom Tiberius, the successor of Augustus, intrusted the entire government of the empire, so that he himself might give all his time to debauchery. Sejanus plotted to supplant his master, and the untimely discovery of this conspiracy caused his downfall, A.D. 31.

17. **Hannibal** (247–183 B.C.). The great Carthaginian general. He invaded Italy in 218 B.C., and for fifteen years defeated every army the Romans sent against him, but was finally obliged to return to Africa to oppose the Roman general Scipio's attack on Carthage. Here he was defeated at Zama, which battle closed the Second Punic War. By many he is considered the greatest general of antiquity.

17. **Johnson's Charles.** Charles XII., king of Sweden (1697–1718). In 1700, when he was only eighteen years old, he was attacked by a coalition of Denmark, Poland, and Russia. In two years' time he forced Denmark to sue for peace, defeated at Narva the Russian army, which outnumbered his forces six to one, and drove Augustus, the king of Poland, from that country, supplanting him by a king of his own choice. Later, he invaded Russia, and was finally defeated by Peter the Great at Pultowa, 1709. (Read Byron's *Mazeppa.*) Charles then fled to Turkey, where he managed to rouse the porte against Peter. The great czar was only saved from destruction through the bribing of the Turkish vizier by Catherine, afterward Peter's wife and empress. Charles was finally imprisoned by the Turks, but escaped in 1714, to find that most of his provinces south of the Baltic had been conquered by his enemies. Nevertheless, undaunted, he attacked the Norwegian possessions of Denmark, but was killed by a musket ball at the siege of the little fortress of Friedrickshald. There was suspicion that he was assassinated.

The following lines are the conclusion of Johnson's description, beginning after the defeat of Pultowa : —

"The vanquished hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemned a needy suppliant to wait,
While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
. . . . . .
But did not Chance at length the errour mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress and a dubious hand;
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

19. **The miseries of a literary life.**

"Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from letters to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.
See nations, slowly wise and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, yet again attend,
Hear Lydiat's life and Galileo's end."

Boswell says that "patron" (in the fourth line) was originally "garret," but that Johnson made the change after his experience with Lord Chesterfield. This great poem is printed entire in Coates's *Fireside Encyclopædia of Poetry*, in Hale's *Longer English Poems*, and in Syle's *From Milton to Tennyson*.

21. **Demosthenes and Cicero.** The greatest Athenian orator was Demosthenes (384 or 385–322 B.C.), and the greatest Roman orator, Cicero (106–43, B.C.). Neither of them has been equalled, though all the greatest modern orators have used them

as models. Most schoolboys are familiar with the *Orations against Catiline*, and Demosthenes' *Oration on the Crown* is universally admitted to be the greatest speech ever delivered.

P. 25, l. 3. **A humble stage in Goodman's Fields.** A theatre not far from the Tower of London, built in 1729. Garrick made the success of the house in 1741.

5. **Drury Lane Theatre.** First opened under Killegrew's patent in 1663, and rebuilt several times since.

P. 26, l. 18. **The versification of "Irene."** Compare the following lines from Johnson's tragedy with the extracts from his satires given above: —

> "Arrayed in purer light, look down on me
> In pleasing visions and assuasive dreams."
>
> "Can brave Leontius call for airy wonders,
> Which cheats interpret, and which fools regard?"
>
> "Through hissing ages, a proverbial coward,
> The tale of women, and the scorn of fools."

Read Macaulay's *Addison* (paragraphs 22–25) for a good description of this sort of verse.

19. **Benefit nights.** The author of a play had the profits of every third night.

P. 27, l. 1. **The Tatler** was a periodical published three times a week, begun by Richard Steele (1672–1729) in 1709. In this work he was joined by his friend, Joseph Addison (1672–1719), who aided him still more effectively in the *Spectator*, a daily literary journal of higher tone and character, continued through 635 numbers. Read Macaulay's *Essay on Addison*, and also Thackeray's novel *Henry Esmond*, for descriptions of these celebrated authors.

16. **Richardson**, Samuel (1689–1761). The first great English novelist. He was a bookseller, who after his fiftieth year wrote the novels *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*. These are noted for their minute analysis of character. They enjoyed great popularity in their day, but now, on account of their extreme length, are rarely read.

18. **Young**, Edward (1684 ?–1765). A noted writer in his time, but now almost forgotten. His best work is a solemn poem entitled *Night Thoughts*.

18. **Hartley**, David (1705–1757). A celebrated mental philosopher of the eighteenth century. His chief work is *Observations on Man*.

20. **Dodington**. George Bubb Dodington, afterward Lord Melcombe, controlled six seats in Parliament, and consequently had to be reckoned with in the politics of the time. He changed sides several times merely to further his own interests. However, he was a man of taste and reading and is accounted the last of the "patrons of literature." For some time he exercised a great influence over Prince Frederic, perhaps for the following reason. Walpole reports that the prince said to him: "Dodington is reckoned a clever man, and yet I have got £5,000 from him which he will never see again."

24. **Prince Frederic** was the eldest son of George II., and the father of George III. He was bitterly opposed to his father, who returned his dislike. The king is reported to have said: "My dear first born is the greatest ass, and the greatest liar, and the greatest *canaille*, and the greatest beast in the whole world, and I heartily wish he was out of it." Frederic's place in history was summed up by the following epigram current soon after his death: —

"Here lies Fred
Who was alive and is dead. . . .
There's no more to be said."

P. 28, l. 21. **The purity of the English tongue.** "Some said that the hard words in the *Rambler* were used by the author to render his Dictionary indispensably necessary." — *Burney.*

P. 29, l. 7. **Sir Roger,** etc. Characters or papers in the *Spectator.*

15. **Squire Bluster,** etc. Characters or papers in the *Rambler.*

P. 30, l. 2. **Which she accepted with but little gratitude.** The following, which Johnson wrote of his wife shortly after her death, tells another tale. He describes her as a woman "whom none who were capable of distinguishing either moral or intellectual excellence, could know without esteem or tenderness. She was extensively charitable in her judgments and opinions, grateful for every kindness she received, and willing to impart assistance of every kind to all whom her little power enabled her to benefit. She passed through many months of languour, weakness, and decay, without a single murmur of impatience, and often expressed her adoration of that mercy which granted her so long a time for recollection and penitence." — Johnson's *Works*, Vol. IX., p. 523.

5. **The Gunnings.** Maria and Elizabeth, the two beautiful daughters of a poor Irish gentleman. When they were presented to the lord lieutenant in Dublin, they wore dresses borrowed from Peg Woffington, the celebrated actress. They went to London in 1751 and created a great sensation. Crowds followed them whenever they appeared in public, and

they were generally called "The Beauties." Maria, who married the Earl of Coventry, was at one time granted a guard of soldiers by the king to protect her from the too fervent admiration of the public. Elizabeth became first the Duchess of Hamilton, and, by a second marriage, Duchess of Argyll. When she was presented at court after her first marriage, the anxiety to see her was so great that "the noble mob in the drawing room clambered upon chairs and tables to look at her." Horace Walpole mentions the sisters frequently in his letters.

6. **Lady Mary.** Daughter of the Duke of Kingston and wife of Mr. E. Wortley Montague. She was noted for her wit and for her intimacy with distinguished men of letters. Her devoted friendship and subsequent bitter quarrel with Alexander Pope gave rise to one of the most famous literary feuds of the eighteenth century. The delightful *Letters* which she wrote from Constantinople are still widely read; and we owe to her the practice of inoculation which she had witnessed in Turkey.

6. **Her opinion of his writings.** Boswell writes: "Johnson told me, with an amiable fondness, a little pleasing circumstance relative to this work [the *Rambler*]. Mrs. Johnson, in whose judgment and taste he had great confidence, said to him after a few numbers of the *Rambler* had come out, 'I thought very well of you before; but I did not imagine you could have written anything equal to this.' Distant praise from whatever quarter is not so delightful as that of a wife whom a man loves and esteems."

8. **The Monthly Review** was the leading Whig periodical of the day, and therefore predisposed to be sharply critical of the outspoken Tory, Johnson.

P. 31, l. 8. **Dictator.** "And I hereby declare that I make a

total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson, during the term of his dictatorship. Nay more, I will not only obey him, like an old Roman, as my dictator, but, like a modern Roman, I will implicitly believe in him as my Pope, and hold him to be infallible while in the chair, but no longer." Chesterfield's paper in the *World*, December 5, 1754.

15. **In a letter.** The famous letter is as follows: —

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

February 7, 1755.

My Lord,

I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the *World* that two papers in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre* — that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I have done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

23. **Horne Tooke** (1736–1812). A celebrated etymologist and Whig political writer. In 1775 he was fined and imprisoned for publishing an advertisement in which he accused the king's troops of barbarously murdering the Americans at Lexington. He was a great conversationalist, but his fame rests on his *Diversions of Purley*, a work on the etymology and analysis of English words.

P. 32, l. 16. **Scarcely a Teutonic language.** English, German, Dutch, and the Scandinavian dialects form the Teutonic language group. Macaulay's statement here is overdrawn. More than seventy per cent of the words in Johnson's most pompous writings are of Teutonic origin. It may interest the

student to examine in this regard the extracts from the writings of Johnson given in these notes.

17. **Junius and Skinner.** "For the Teutonick etymologies I am commonly indebted to Junius and Skinner . . . Junius appears to have excelled in extent of learning and Skinner in rectitude of understanding. . . . Skinner is often ignorant but never ridiculous: Junius is always full of knowledge, but his variety distracts the judgement, and his learning is very frequently disgraced by his absurdities." — Johnson's *Works*, Vol. V., p. 29. Francis Junius the younger was born at Heidelberg in 1589, and died at Windsor in 1678. His *Etymologicum Anglicanum* was not published till 1743. The *Etymologicon Linguæ Anglicanæ* of Stephen Skinner (1623–1667) was published in 1671.

P. 33, l. 15. **Jenyns**, Soame (1704–1787). A somewhat noted wit and minor poet. His first poem was the *Art of Dancing*. Originally a mild sceptic, he later was converted, and wrote one of the popular eighteenth-century works on the Evidences of Christianity. He is now remembered only on account of Johnson's review of his paper on the *Origin of Evil*. See Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Ch. VII., Secs. 15–17.

P. 34, l. 11. "**Rasselas.**" The original title given by Johnson to the publisher was, *The Choice of Life, or the History of . . . . . Prince of Abyssinia.* It was written in January, 1759, and published probably before April. There were eight editions in Johnson's lifetime, and it was translated into almost every modern language. After the sixth edition, the title was changed to *Rasselas.* It is the most complete expression of his message to the world. (See Appendix, p. 187.) The first

sentence, which is often quoted, is an excellent example of Johnson's weighty style.

"Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope, who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow, attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia."

13. **Miss Lydia Languish** is the heroine of Sheridan's comedy, the *Rivals*, — a young beauty much given to reading sentimental novels and to indulging in romantic fancies.

22. **The Critical Review** was the leading Tory periodical of the day.

P. 35, l. 20. **The Happy Valley** was the place where, according to Johnson's tale, the royal children of Abyssinia were educated.

21. **Newton**, Sir Isaac (1642–1727). The greatest mathematician and natural philosopher of modern times.

24. **Bruce's Travels.** Macaulay implies that Johnson could have informed himself of the real character of the natives of Abyssinia. But James Bruce started on his voyage to Abyssinia in 1768 and returned in 1773, fourteen years after the publication of *Rasselas;* his *Travels* were published six years after Johnson's death. When Johnson wrote his tale, Abyssinia was a sort of romantic unknown land, for Lobo's book (see *note*, p. 9, l. 7) was hardly more than a clever fiction. At that time little was known of Asiatic or African peoples. Few Europeans had even studied their languages, and it was a common thing for eighteenth-century writers to lay the scenes of their tales in these half-known lands, in order to be freer in their satire and criticism of their own countries, and to escape the dangers of the censorship. No attempt was made to depict

accurately the manners and customs of lands almost as unknown as "Lilliput" and "Brobdingnag." Johnson was but following the fashion of the time, and had any one suggested that he had described Egypt and Cairo incorrectly, he would have crushed the "puppy" with one of his "rhinoceros laughs."

P. 36, l. 3. **Burke**, Edmund (1728?–1797). The most noted orator of his time as well as an essayist of great powers. His best essays are those on the *Sublime and the Beautiful* and on the *French Revolution.* His greatest speeches are *Conciliation with America* and the *Impeachment of Warren Hastings.* Although a fervid Whig, he and Johnson were firm friends. There is an interesting sketch of Burke in Macaulay's *Essay* on *Warren Hastings.*

4. **Mrs. Lennox**, Charlotte (1720–1804). Daughter of Lieutenant-governor Ramsay of New York. At the age of fifteen she went to England and devoted herself to literature, writing novels and dramas now forgotten. She was on terms of intimacy with Richardson and Johnson. Hawkins writes: "One evening at the club Johnson proposed to celebrate the birthday of Mrs. Lennox's literary child, as he called her book, by a whole night spent in festivity. Our supper was elegant, and Johnson had directed that a magnificent hot apple pie should make a part of it, and this he would have stuck with bay leaves, because, forsooth, Mrs. Lennox was an authoress, and had written verses, and further he had prepared for her a crown of laurel, with which, but not till he had invoked the Muses by some ceremonies of his own invention, he enriched her brows. About five, Johnson's face shone with meridian splendour, though his drink had been only lemonade."

In the *Dictionary* Johnson cited a passage to illustrate the word *talent* from her best novel, the *Female Quixote.* And he used very few citations from contemporary writers.

5. **Mrs. Sheridan** (1724–1766) was the mother of the dramatist and orator Richard Brinsley Sheridan. She was also a novelist and dramatist of vogue. Johnson spent many pleasant hours in her society, she being, as Boswell says, "a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man."

19. **The poet who made Hector quote Aristotle**, etc. See Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, Act II., Sc. ii., and *Winter's Tale*, Act II., Sc. i., and Act V., Sc. ii. **Hector** was the hero of Troy in the legendary Trojan War, supposed to have taken place in the twelfth century B.C. **Aristotle**, one of the greatest of Greek philosophers, lived in the fourth century B.C. **Julio Romano** (1492–1546) was an Italian painter and Raphael's favorite pupil. At **Delphi** was the most famous oracle of ancient Greece.

P. 37, l. 8. **Language so coarse**, etc. "Coarse" is altogether too strong a word to apply to Johnson's language, which was noted, both in conversation and writing, for its freedom from all obscenity and profanity — a remarkable thing in those days. The definition referred to is: "Excise: A hateful tax levied upon commodities and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but by wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid."

10. **The Lord Privy Seal** is the title of the officer who has the custody of the Privy Seal which is appended to British documents not important enough to require the Great Seal. The lord referred to is Lord Gower. Boswell reports that Johnson said to him: "You know, Sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word *Renegado*, after

telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, *sometimes we say a Gower*. Thus it went to the press: but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out."

20. **The city was becoming mutinous.** London has always been the stronghold of the opposition to the extension of the royal prerogatives.

21. **Cavendishes and Bentincks,** etc. The Cavendishes (Dukes of Devonshire) and the Bentincks (Dukes of Portland) were prominent Whig families, closely intermarried. The Somersets (Dukes of Beaufort) and the Wyndhams (Earls of Egremont), also closely connected, were equally noted on the Tory side. George I. and George II. had left the government of England practically in the hands of the great Whig families to whom they owed the throne. But George III. (1760–1820) had been brought up by his mother with the idea that he should be a real king, not a creature of Parliament; that he should rule, not merely reign. His plan was to break the Whig power by drawing the disaffected members of that party, together with some of the leading Tories, into a new party which was known as the "King's Friends." Although George was "wretchedly educated, and his natural powers were of the meanest sort," he succeeded for a time, had his own obstinate way, and as a consequence lost the American Colonies. Read Macaulay's *Essay* on *The Earl of Chatham*, Green's *History*, Ch. X., Sec. II., and Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America*.

23. **Lord Bute** (1713–1792) was prime minister from May, 1762, to April, 1763. His government is notorious for being one of the most unpopular that ever held office in England.

P. 38, l. 12. **The printer's devil or the sheriff's officer.** One of the duties of the youngest apprentice in the printing

offices is to "run after copy," and so he would naturally be a terror to Johnson who generally did his writing at full speed at the last moment. The sheriff's officers had, as we know, arrested Johnson several times for debt. The following extract from *Boswell* gives Johnson's reasons for practically ceasing to write: . . . "JOHNSON. 'No, Sir, I am not obliged to do any more. No man is obliged to do as much as he can do. A man is to have part of his life to himself. If a soldier has fought a good many campaigns, he is not to be blamed if he retires to ease and tranquillity. A physician who has practised long in a great city may be excused if he retires to a small town and takes less practice. Now, Sir, the good I can do by my conversation bears the same proportion to the good I can do by my writings, that the practice of a physician, retired to a small town, does to his practice in a great city.' BOSWELL. 'But I wonder, Sir, you have not more pleasure in writing than in not writing.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, you *may* wonder.'"

P. 39, l. 15. **Cock Lane.** The following account is from Hare's *Walks in London*, Vol. I., p. 204 seq.: —

"Till a few years ago people frequently came to this crypt [of St. John's church, Clerkenwall] to visit the coffin (now buried) of 'Scratching Fanny the Cock Lane Ghost,' which had excited the utmost attention in 1762, being as Walpole said, not a *apparition*, but an *audition*. It was supposed that the spirit of a young lady poisoned by a lover to whom she had bequeathed her property, came to visit, invisibly, but with very mysterious noises, a girl named Parsons who lived in Cock Lane (between Smithfield and Holborn) and was daughter to clerk of St. Sepulchre's church. Horace Walpole went to see the victim, with the Duke of York, Lady Northumberland, Lady Mary Coke, and Lord Hertford, but after waiting till half-past one in the morning in a suffocating room with fifty people

crowded into it, he was told that the ghost would not come that night till seven in the morning, 'when,' says Walpole, 'there were only prentices and old women.' At length the ghost having promised by an affirmative knock, that she would attend any one of her visitors in the vaults of St. John's church, and there knock upon her coffin, an investigation was made, of which Dr. Johnson, who was present, has left a description. . . . The failure of the investigation led to the discovery that the father of the girl who was the supposed object of spiritual visitation had arranged the plot in order to frighten the man accused of murder into remitting a loan which he had received from him whilst he was lodging in his house. Parsons was imprisoned for a year, and placed three times in the pillory, where, however, instead of maltreating him, the London mob raised a subscription in his favour."

Of this incident Boswell says: "The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he had discovered it." And "Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was discovered. The story had become so popular that he thought it should be investigated."

Johnson's account of the investigation written for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, closed with these words: "It is therefore the opinion of the whole assembly, that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and that there is no

agency of any higher cause." The student should examine the passage in the essay carefully to see how Macaulay manages to imply that Johnson was duped. See Hill's *Boswell*, Vol. I., p. 407, *note;* the *Cock Lane Ghost*, by A. Lang; and the *Cock Lane Ghost*, by Howard Pyle, in *Harper's Magazine*, August, 1893.

23. **Churchill**, Charles (1731–1764) a popular poet and satirist, noted for his profligacy as well as his stinging wit. His *Rosciad* achieved an immense vogue. The following are some of the lines in Churchill's *Ghost* which are referred to by Macaulay, and are an excellent example of the personal satire of the eighteenth century.

"Pomposo, insolent and loud,
Vain idol of the scribbling crowd.

Who, proudly seized of learning's throne,
Now damns all learning but his own.

But makes each sentence current pass
With puppy, coxcomb, scoundrel, ass.

Who to increase his native strength
Draws words six syllables in length,
With which, assisted with a frown
By way of club, he knocks us down.

He for subscribers baits his hook,
And takes their cash — but where's the book?
No matter where — wise fear, we know,
Forbids the robbing of a foe;
But what, to serve our private ends,
Forbids the cheating of our friends?"

P. 40, l. 15. **Polonius.** See Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* W. Tooke said of Johnson's *Shakespeare:* "The extraordinary merit of the preface and critical observations atoned for the meagreness

of the notes." The note on Polonius, Act II., Sc. IV., is as follows: —

Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident of his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it has become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. The idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phænomena of the character of *Polonius*.

17. **Wilhelm Meister** is Goethe's greatest prose work,—a novel he was years in writing, and which contains some of his ripest thoughts. Among these is his world-famous criticism on *Hamlet*, which is scattered through Book IV. The concluding paragraph from the characterization of Hamlet in Ch. XIII. will give an idea of the whole: —

"A lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him; the present one is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of him; not in themselves impossibilities, but

such for him. He winds, and turns, and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind, at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts, yet still without recovering his peace of mind." — Carlyle's *Translation* of *Wilhelm Meister.*

18. **It would be difficult to name**, etc. The honest Johnson did not slur his work, though later Shakespearian commentators have naturally gone far beyond him. He says (*Works*, Vol. V., p. 152): "I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own: yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure which I have not attempted to illustrate."

P. 41, l. 12. **Ben.** Ben Jonson (1574?–1637) was, next to Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of the Elizabethan Age. Every one knows his beautiful song, "Drink to me only with thine eyes," and his lines to the memory of Shakespeare which contain the often-quoted verse,—

"He was not of an age, but for all time."

20. **Æschylus, Sophocles,** and **Euripides** were the three greatest poets of the ancient Greek drama, which reached its perfection at Athens in the fifth century B.C.

25. **Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont,** and **Fletcher** were English dramatists contemporary with Shakespeare and Johnson. Decker is usually spelled Dekker.

P. 42, l. 9. **Doctor's degree.** In 1755 the degree of M.A. was conferred upon Johnson by Oxford on account of the *Dictionary* which was about to appear. Trinity College, Dublin, gave him the degree of LL.D. in 1765. The Oxford degree of Doctor of Laws was granted in 1775, through the influence of the prime

minister, Lord North, who was Chancellor of the University, as a reward for Johnson's political writings in support of North's policies. Boswell says: "It is remarkable that he never, as far as I knew, assumed his title of *Doctor*, but called himself *Mr.* Johnson."

10. **The Royal Academy** of Fine Arts was founded by a charter of George III. in 1768. The following year Johnson was appointed Professor of Ancient Literature, — an honorary office, with no salary.

P. 44, l. 5. **A club.** Boswell writes: "Soon after his [Johnson's] return to London, which was in February, was founded that CLUB which existed so long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of THE LITERARY CLUB. Sir Joshua Reynolds had the merit of being the first proposer of it, to which Johnson acceded, and the original members were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Edmund Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Chamier, and Sir John Hawkins. They met at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho, one evening in every week, at seven, and generally continued their conversation till a pretty late hour. The club has been gradually increased to its present number, thirty-five [1791]. After about ten years, instead of supping weekly, it was resolved to dine together once a fortnight during the meeting of Parliament."

11. **The trunk maker and the pastry cook.** Before wrapping paper was made cheaply out of straw and wood pulp, the sheets of unsalable books were used for lining trunks and wrapping up confectionery.

13. **Goldsmith**, Oliver (1728–1774) the most delightful author of his age. His poems, the *Traveller* and the *Deserted*

Village, and his novel, the *Vicar of Wakefield*, are still widely read; while his comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, still holds the stage. Read Macaulay's *Life of Goldsmith*, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The *Jessamy Bride*, a novel by F. Frankfort Moore, though rather slight in workmanship, has Goldsmith as its hero, and contains some bright sketches of Johnson, and the leading members of "The Literary Club."

15. **Reynolds**, Sir Joshua (1723–1792). The best painter of England in the eighteenth century, and a noted writer on art. His portraits are especially remarkable. He was the first president of the Royal Academy, and was knighted by the king on his appointment.

16. **Gibbon**, Edward (1737–1794). His *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ranks among the greatest histories ever written, and is certainly the best ever written in English.

17. **Jones**, Sir William (1746–1794). The first great English Oriental scholar, and founder of the Royal Asiatic Society. His most famous work is his translation of the beautiful Sanscrit drama, *Sakuntala*, which introduced European scholars to a new and wonderful world.

24. **Bennet Langton** (1737–1801), though a gentleman of independent means and a great student, published nothing, yet Mrs. Piozzi writes: "I remember when to have Langton at a man's house stamped him at once as a literary character." Boswell says: "Johnson was not less ready to love Mr. Langton for his being of a very ancient family, for I have heard him say with pleasure 'Langton, Sir, has a grant of free warren from Henry the Second; and Cardinal Stephen Langton of King John's reign was of his family.'"

P. 45, l. 1. **Topham Beauclerk** (1739–1780) was the only son

of Lord Sidney Beauclerk, fifth son of the first Duke of St. Alban's, and consequently a great-grandson of Charles II. and Nell Gwynn. He was a great lover of literature, and at his death left a library of thirty thousand volumes especially rich in English drama and English history. Boswell says: "Mr. Beauclerk's being of the St. Alban's family, and having in some particulars a resemblance to Charles the Second, contributed in Johnson's imagination to throw a lustre upon his other qualities, and in a short time, the moral, pious Johnson, and the gay, dissipated Beauclerk, were companions. 'What a coalition!' (said Garrick when he heard of this;) 'I shall have my old friend to bail out of the Round-house.' But I can bear testimony that it was a very agreeable association. Beauclerk was too polite, and valued learning and wit too much, to offend Johnson by sallies of wit and licentiousness; and Johnson delighted in the good qualities of Beauclerk, and hoped to correct the evil. Innumerable were the scenes in which Johnson was amused by these young men. [Boswell gives a most entertaining account of a 'frisk' of Johnson with Langton and Beauclerk, who once after midnight routed the grave philosopher out of his bed and took him about the town.] Beauclerk could take more liberty with him than anybody with whom I ever saw him; but, on the other hand, Beauclerk was not spared by his respectable companion, when reproof was proper."

16. **James Boswell** (1740–1795). Macaulay is extreme in his judgment of Boswell, or "Bozzy," as Johnson affectionately called him. In his essay on Croker's *Edition of Boswell*, he is even more severe. Carlyle, in his essay on Boswell's *Johnson*, while admitting gross defects, does justice to Boswell's undoubted merits. The student should read both essays, of which

copious extracts are given in the Appendix. A part of the two views of Boswell is given here.

"We are not sure that there is in the whole history of the human intellect so strange a phænomenon as this book. Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biography. Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all. He was, if we are to give any credit to his own account, or to the united testimony of all who knew him, a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect."

"Of the talents which ordinarily raise men to eminence as writers, Boswell had absolutely none. There is not in all his books a single remark of his own on literature, politics, religion, or society, which is not either commonplace or absurd."

"That such a man should have written one of the best books in the world is strange enough. But this is not all. Many persons who have conducted themselves foolishly in active life, and whose conversation has indicated no supe-

"Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye; visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities, again, belonged not to the Time he lived in; were far from common then; indeed, in such a degree, were almost unexampled; not recognizable therefore by every one; nay, apt even (so strange had they grown) to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to, and had sprung out of."

"Thus does poor Bozzy stand out to us as an ill-assorted, glaring mixture of the highest and the lowest. What, indeed, is man's life generally but a kind of beast-godhood; the god in us triumphing more and more over the beast; striving more and more to subdue it under his feet?"

"Nay, sometimes a strange enough hypothesis has been started of him; as if it were in virtue even of these same bad qualities that he did his good work; as if it were the

rior powers of mind, have left us valuable works. Goldsmith was very justly described by one of his contemporaries as an inspired idot, and by another as a being

'Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll.'

La Fontaine was in society a mere simpleton. His blunders would not come in amiss among the stories of Hierocles. But these men attained literary eminence in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell attained it by reason of his weaknesses. If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer. Without all the qualities which made him the jest and the torment of those among whom he lived, without the officiousness, the inquisitiveness, the effrontery, the toad-eating, the insensibility to all reproof, he never could have produced so excellent a book. He was a slave proud of his servitude, a Paul Pry, convinced that his own curiosity and garrulity were virtues, an unsafe companion who never scrupled to repay the most liberal hospitality by the basest violation of confidence, a man without delicacy, without shame, without very fact of his being among the worst men in this world that had enabled him to write one of the best books therein! Falser hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. *Bad* is by its nature negative, and can do *nothing;* whatsoever enables us to *do* anything is by its very nature *good.* Alas, that there should be teachers in Israel, or even learners, to whom this world-ancient fact is still problematical, or even deniable! Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent, above all, of his Love and childlike Open-mindedness. His sneaking sycophancies, his greediness and forwardness, whatever was bestial and earthy in him, are so many blemishes in his Book, which still disturb us in its clearness: wholly hindrances, not helps. Towards Johnson, however, his feeling was not Sycophancy, which is the lowest, but Reverence, which is the highest of human feelings. None but a *reverent* man (which so unspeakably few are) could have

out sense enough to know when he was hurting the feelings of others, or when he was exposing himself to derision; and because he was all this, he has, in an important department of literature, immeasurably surpassed such writers as Tacitus, Clarendon, Alfieri, and his own idol Johnson."

—*Macaulay.*

found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's: if such worship for real God-made superiors showed itself also as worship for apparent Tailor-made superiors, even as hollow interested mouth-worship for such,—the case, in this composite human nature of ours, was not miraculous, the more was the pity! But for ourselves, let every one of us cling to this last article of Faith, and know it as the beginning of all knowledge worth the name: That neither James Boswell's good Book, nor any other good thing, in any time or in any place, was, is, or can be performed by any man in virtue of his *badness*, but always and solely in spite thereof."—*Carlyle.*

P. 46, l. 6. **Wilkes**, John (1727–1797). A prominent English politician of the latter half of the eighteenth century. "Wilkes was a worthless profligate, but he had a remarkable faculty of enlisting popular sympathy on his side, and, by a singular irony of fortune, he became the chief instrument in bringing about three of the greatest advances which our Constitution has ever made. He woke the nation to the need of Parliamentary reform by his defence of the rights of constituencies against the despotism of the House of Commons. He took the lead in the struggle which put an end to the secrecy

of Parliamentary proceedings. He was the first to establish the right of the Press to discuss public affairs."—Green's *History*, Ch. X., Sec. II.

8. **Whitfield** or Whitefield, George (1714–1770). The founder of the sect of Calvinistic Methodists, who separated from the Wesleyan Methodists in 1741. "Whitefield's preaching was such as England had never heard before, theatrical, extravagant, often commonplace; but hushing all criticism by its intense reality, its earnestness of belief, its deep, tremulous sympathy with the sin and sorrow of mankind. It was no common enthusiast who could wring gold from the close-fisted Franklin, and admiration from the fastidious Horace Walpole; or, who could look down from the top of a green knoll at Kingswood on twenty thousand colliers, grimy from the Bristol coal pits; and see, as he preached, the tears making white channels down their blackened cheeks."—Green's *History*, Ch. X., Sec. I.

20. **Johnson was a water drinker.** Boswell reports: "Talking of drinking wine, he [Johnson] said, 'I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this.' BOSWELL. 'Why then, Sir, did you leave it off?' JOHNSON. 'Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose power over himself. . . . There is more happiness in being rational. . . . [And elsewhere] . . . Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore, after having been for some time without it, on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it.'"

P. 48, l. 2. **The Thrales.** Mrs. Thrale (Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 125) says they first met in 1764. Mr. Thrale sought an excuse for inviting him. Johnson dined with them every Thursday through the winter of 1764–1765, and in the autumn of 1765 followed them to Brighton. The correspondence between Johnson and Mrs. Thrale is published in part in Scoone's *Four Centuries of English Letters.*

21. **Southwark.** A district of London south of the Thames. Thrale's brewery was sold by Johnson, as executor of the estate, to Barclay, Perkins & Co., whose successors still carry on the business under the same firm name. It is one of the largest breweries in London. The buildings, which occupy twelve acres, are situated on Park Street near the famous St. Saviour's Church and not far from London Bridge.

22. **Streatham Common.** A suburban district a few miles south of London.

P. 49, l. 20. **Bath** and **Brighton** were in the eighteenth century the two most fashionable watering-places in England. Brighton, on the south coast, is still flourishing; but Bath, in Somersetshire, has lost much of its former vogue. A delightful account of Bath in the fulness of its glory is given in Goldsmith's interesting *Life of Richard Nash*, commonly known as "Beau Nash," who was master of ceremonies there. Read *Monsieur Beaucaire*, by Booth Tarkington.

23. **Fleet Street** is one of the busiest streets in the centre of London, and runs from Ludgate Circus to the Strand and then westward.

P. 50, l. 8. **An old lady named Williams.** Of her Johnson wrote: "Thirty years and more she had been my companion, and her death has left me very desolate." Hawkins (*Life of*

Johnson, p. 558) says that "she had not only cheered him in his solitude, and helped him to pass with comfort those hours which otherwise would have been irksome to him, but had relieved him from domestic cares, regulated and watched over the expenses of his house." "Had she had," wrote Johnson, "good humor and prompt elocution, her universal curiosity and comprehensive knowledge would have made her the delight of all that knew her." — *Piozzi Letters*, Vol. II., p. 311. "When she grew peevish in her old age and last sickness, he was forced to bribe the maid to stay with her by a secret stipulation of half-a-crown a week over her wages." — *Boswell.*

P. 51, l. 3. **The Mitre Tavern** was in Mitre Court, just off Fleet Street, and there Johnson and many other literary men were wont to gather.

13. **To torment him and live upon him.** And it may be added, to furnish objects for his overflowing charity and affection. Johnson once said: "If I did not assist them no one else would, and they must be lost from want." Mrs. Thrale writes: "If, however, I ventured to blame their ingratitude, and condemn their conduct, he would instantly set about softening the one and justifying the other; and finished commonly by telling me, that I knew not how to make allowances for situations I never experienced." She also states that he loved the poor as she never saw any one else love them, with an earnest desire to make them happy. He proposed to allow himself a hundred pounds a year out of the three hundred of his pension; but she could never discover that he really spent upon himself more than seventy or at most eighty pounds. In contrast to Macaulay's clever but rather superficial picture, compare what Carlyle says on the same subject. See Appendix, pp. 179–181.

P. 52, l. 6. **The Celtic region.** That part of Scotland where a Celtic language, the Erse, was spoken. Celtic languages are still spoken also in parts of Wales, Ireland, and Brittany.

Johnson made a profound impression on the natives. "He was long remembered amongst the lower orders of Hebrideans by the title of *Sassenach More*, the *big Englishman*." — *Walter Scott.* From the Isle of Skye Johnson wrote: "The hospitality of this remote region is like that of the Golden Age. We have found ourselves treated at every house as if we came to confer a benefit." — *Piozzi Letters*, Vol. I., p. 155.

P. 53, l. 3. **Presbyterian polity and ritual.** The Reformation in Scotland had mainly taken the Calvinistic form, owing to the work of the great John Knox, and the Presbyterian Church was established. From the accession of James I. to the throne of England, down to the expulsion of James II., the Stuart kings had constantly endeavored to force the Episcopalian polity upon the Scotch Calvinists. In this they were met by the "Covenanters," as the adherents of the Presbytery were called, and the struggle went on with varying fortunes till the Covenanters, by taking the side of William and Mary, secured the reëstablishment of the Presbytery. At the Union of England and Scotland (1707) Presbyterianism was definitely recognized as the established religion of the northern kingdom. Read *Old Mortality*, by Walter Scott.

6. **Berwickshire** and **East Lothian** are districts in the south of Scotland.

8. **Lord Mansfield**, William Murray (1705–1793). A great British jurist. He became Lord Chief Justice and Baron Mans-

field in 1756, and Earl of Mansfield in 1776. His judicial decisions were notoriously severe. Horace Walpole speaks of him as one, "who never felt pity and never relented unless terrified," and as one "who hated the popular party as much as he loved severity."

23. **Macpherson**, James (1738–1796) obtained a remarkable notoriety by his alleged discovery of the "Poems of Ossian" in the Erse language. These he claimed to have translated. In 1762 he published *Fingal, an Epic Poem in Six Books*, and the following year *Temora, an Epic Poem in Eight Books*. They created a great sensation, were translated into every modern European language, and gave rise to a fierce controversy. Critics demanded a sight of the originals, but Macpherson never gratified them.

P. 54, l. 2. **Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery** in the following letter: —

"MR. JAMES MACPHERSON:

"I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

"What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the publick, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable, and what I hear of your morals, inclines me to pay regard not to what you say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

24. **Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons.** Obscure writers who would now be entirely forgotten had they not attacked Johnson.

P. 55, l. 7. "**Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum.**" "O greatest one, if you are willing, I desire to contend with you."

20. **Bentley**, Richard (1662–1742). England's greatest classical scholar. His famous *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris* was the first attempt to apply the principles of historical criticism to the authenticity of ancient writings. In Macaulay's *Life of Francis Atterbury* (*Encyclopædia Britannica*) is a very entertaining account of the famous discussion on Phalaris and of Bentley's part in it. The "apothegm" in full is, "It is a maxim with me that no man was ever written out of reputation but by himself." — Monk's *Life of Bentley*, p. 90.

P. 56, l. 14. **Taxation no Tyranny.** This was intended to offset the effect of the great Whig orations, such as Burke's *Conciliation with America*. The pamphlet, however, was better than Macaulay will allow. "Johnson's sentiments towards his fellow subjects in America have never, so far as I know, been rightly stated. It was not because they fought for liberty that he had come to dislike them. A man who, bursting forth with generous indignation has said: 'The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see the minority prevailing over the majority,' was not likely to wish that our plantations should be tyrannically governed. The man who, in company with some grave men at Oxford, gave as his toast, 'Here's to the next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies,' was not likely to condemn insurrection in general. The key to his feelings is

found in his indignant cry, 'How is it that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?' He hated slavery as perhaps no man of his time hated it. In 1756, he described Jamaica as a 'place of great wickedness, a den of tyrants, and a dungeon of slaves.'"—Hill's *Boswell*, Vol. II., Appendix B.

18. **Sheridan**, Richard Brinsley Butler (1751–1816). A celebrated dramatist and orator. Two of his comedies, the *Rivals* and the *School for Scandal*, still hold the stage; and his speech at the "impeachment of Warren Hastings is still remembered as perhaps the very grandest triumph of oratory in a time prolific of such triumphs." See Macaulay's *Essay* on *Warren Hastings*.

20. **Wilson**, Richard (1714–1782). The first great English landscape painter.

P. 58, l. 4. **Cowley**, Abraham (1618–1667). Although quite forgotten now, Cowley's poetry was once considered equal to that of Spenser and Shakespeare.

8. **The Restoration.** The return in 1660 of the Stuarts after the rule of the Long Parliament and the Cromwells.

15. **The wits of Button.** "Button's" was a coffee-house in London frequented by Addison and his group of admirers. Read Macaulay's essay on *Addison*, and Pope's sarcastic lines in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*.

15. **Cibber**, Colley (1671–1757). A noted actor and dramatist, one of the patentees of Drury Lane Theatre, and poet laureate in 1730. His adaptations of some of Shakespeare's plays still remain the "acting editions."

17. **Orrery**, John Boyle, Earl of Cork and Orrery. He wrote a life of Swift.

17. **Swift**, Jonathan (1667–1745). The greatest of English satirists, and the most original writer of his time. A clever

versifier, but a master of straightforward prose. His *Gulliver's Travels* are immortal. There is a fine sketch of him in Macaulay's essay on *Addison*.

19. **Services of no very honourable kind to Pope.** "Savage was of great use to Mr. Pope, in helping him to little stories, and idle tales, of many persons whose names, lives, and writings had been long since forgot, had not Mr. Pope mentioned them in his *Dunciad*. This office was too mean for anyone but inconsistent Savage, who, with a great deal of absurd pride, could submit to servile offices; and, for the vanity of being thought Mr. Pope's intimate, made no scruple of frequently sacrificing a regard to sincerity or truth."— Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, Vol. V., p. 266.

P. 60, l. 8. **Dryden**, John (1631–1700). The greatest poet of the Restoration. His satires and fables are masterpieces of their kind. Together with Sir William Temple, Dryden is regarded as having founded modern English prose style. His *Alexander's Feast* and *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* are still read with pleasure.

9. **Gray**, Thomas (1716–1771) will always be remembered for his perfect *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, — the best poem of its kind in English literature.

13. **Malone**, Edmond (1741–1812). A great Shakespearian critic and commentator.

P. 61, l. 3. **Robertson**, William (1721–1793). His *History of Charles V.* is still a standard work.

P. 62, l. 13. **A music master from Brescia.** His name was Piozzi, and he was really an honest, estimable man, making Mrs. Thrale very happy in her second marriage. Macaulay here merely echoes the prevailing British contempt for "fid-

dlers" and musicians generally. See article "Piozzi" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

P. 63, l. 22. **The Ephesian Matron.** A story from Petronius retold in Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Dying*, last chapter. The "matron" attempted to weep herself to death in the tomb of her departed husband, but fell in love with a soldier who was guarding the corpses of some robbers that were hanging near by. In order to save her new lover from punishment, one of the corpses having been stolen while they had been conversing, she gave him the body of her defunct husband to hang in its place.

22. **The two pictures.** See *Hamlet*, Act III., Sc. IV.

P. 64, l. 10. **The feeling described**, etc. "The secret horrour of the last is inseparable from a thinking being, whose life is limited, and to whom death is dreadful. . . . We always make a secret comparison between a part and the whole; the termination of any period of life reminds us that life itself has likewise its termination; when we have done any thing for the last time, we involuntary reflect that a part of the days allotted to us are past, and that as more is past, there is less remaining. . . .

"I hope that my readers are already disposed to view every incident with seriousness, and improve it by meditation; and that, when they see this series of trifles brought to a conclusion, they will consider that, by outliving the *Idler*, they have passed weeks, months, and years, which are no longer in their power; that an end *must* in time be put to everything great as to everything little; that to life must come its last hour, and to this system of being its last day, the hour in which probation ceases, and repentance will be vain; the day in which every work of the hand, and imagination of the heart, shall be brought to judgment, and an everlasting futurity shall be determined by the past." — (From the last number of the *Idler*.)

P. 65, l. 10. **Windham**, William (1750–1810). An English statesman and orator. Macaulay in his *Essay* on *Warren Hastings* says, "There with eyes reverentially fixed on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit, the ingenuous, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham." However, in spite of his great gifts, he gained the disparaging title of "weathercock" from the instability of his opinions.

13. **Frances Burney**, afterwards Madame D'Arblay (1752–1840). Her novels *Evelina* and *Cecilia* had the greatest vogue in their time. They are now rarely read, but her *Journal* and *Letters* are known everywhere. Read Macaulay's essay on *Madame D'Arblay.*

P. 66, l. 3. **Denham**, Sir John (1615–1668). A royalist poet of mediocre ability.

3. **Congreve**, William (1672–1729). One of the leading dramatists of the Restoration.

3. **Gay.** See note on the *Beggar's Opera*, p. 78.

3. **Prior**, Matthew (1664–1721). A minor poet, especially noted for his "society verse."

APPENDIX A

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JOHNSON FROM MACAULAY AND CARLYLE

I. Selections from Macaulay's Essay on Croker's Edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson.—Edinburgh Review, 1831.

Johnson grown old, Johnson in the fulness of his fame and in the enjoyment of a competent fortune, is better known to us than any other man in history. Everything about him, his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his scrofula, his St. Vitus's dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked his approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite for fish-sauce and veal-pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange-peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his puffings, his vigorous, acute, and ready eloquence, his sarcastic

wit, his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage, his queer intimates, old Mr. Levett and blind Mrs. Williams, the cat Hodge and the negro Frank, all are as familiar to us as the objects by which we have been surrounded from childhood.

State of authors in the early eighteenth century.

Johnson came up to London precisely at the time when the condition of a man of letters was most miserable and degraded. It was a dark night between two sunny days. The age of patronage had passed away. The age of general curiosity and intelligence had not arrived. The number of readers is at present so great that a popular author may subsist in comfort and opulence on the profits of his works. In the reigns of William the Third, of Anne, and of George the First, even such men as Congreve and Addison would scarcely have been able to live like gentlemen by the mere sale of their writings. But the deficiency of the natural demand for literature was, at the close of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century, more than made up by artificial encouragement, by a vast system of bounties and premiums. There was, perhaps, never a time at which the rewards of literary merit were so splendid,

at which men who could write well found such easy admittance into the most distinguished society, and to the highest honours of the state. The chiefs of both the great parties into which the kingdom was divided patronised literature with emulous munificence. Congreve, when he had scarcely attained his majority, was rewarded for his first comedy with places which made him independent for life. Smith, though his *Hippolytus and Phœdra* failed, would have been consoled with three hundred a year but for his own folly. Rowe was not only Poet Laureate, but also land-surveyor of the customs in the port of London, clerk of the council to the Prince of Wales, and secretary of the Presentations to the Lord Chancellor. Hughes was secretary to the Commissions of the Peace. Ambrose Philips was judge of the Prerogative Court in Ireland. Locke was Commissioner of Appeals and of the Board of Trade. Newton was Master of the Mint. Stepney and Prior were employed in embassies of high dignity and importance. Gay, who commenced life as an apprentice to a silk-mercer, became a secretary of legation at five-and-twenty. It was to a poem on the *Death of Charles the Second*, and to the *City and Country Mouse*, that Montague owed his introduction into public life, his earldom, his garter, and

his Auditorship of the Exchequer. Swift, but for the unconquerable prejudice of the queen, would have been a bishop. Oxford, with his white staff in his hand, passed through the crowd of his suitors to welcome Parnell, when that ingenious writer deserted the Whigs. Steele was a commissioner of stamps and a member of Parliament. Arthur Mainwaring was a commissioner of the customs, and auditor of the imprest. Tickell was secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland. Addison was secretary of state.

This liberal patronage was brought into fashion, as it seems, by the magnificent Dorset, almost the only noble versifier in the court of Charles the Second who possessed talents for composition which were independent of the aid of a coronet. Montague owed his elevation to the favour of Dorset, and imitated through the whole course of his life the liberality to which he was himself so greatly indebted. The Tory leaders, Harley and Bolingbroke in particular, vied with the chiefs of the Whig party in zeal for the encouragement of letters. But soon after the accession of the House of Hanover a change took place. The supreme power passed to a man who cared little for poetry or eloquence. The importance of the House of Commons was constantly on the increase. The government was under the neces-

sity of bartering for Parliamentary support much of that patronage which had been employed in fostering literary merit; and Walpole was by no means inclined to divert any part of the fund of corruption to purposes which he considered as idle. He had eminent talents for government and for debate. But he had paid little attention to books, and felt little respect for authors. One of the coarse jokes of his friend, Sir Charles Handbury Williams, was far more pleasing to him than Thomson's *Seasons* or Richardson's *Pamela*. He had observed that some of the distinguished writers whom the favour of Halifax had turned into statesmen had been mere encumbrances to their party, dawdlers in office, and mutes in Parliament. During the whole course of his administration, therefore, he scarcely befriended a single man of genius. The best writers of the age gave all their support to the opposition, and contributed to excite that discontent which, after plunging the nation into a foolish and unjust war, overthrew the minister to make room for men less able and equally immoral. The opposition could reward its eulogists with little more than promises and caresses. St. James's would give nothing: Leicester house had nothing to give.

Thus, at the time when Johnson commenced his lit-

erary career, a writer had little to hope from the patronage of powerful individuals. The patronage of the public did not yet furnish the means of comfortable subsistence. The prices paid by booksellers to authors were so low, that a man of considerable talents and unremitting industry could do little more than provide for the day which was passing over him. The lean kine had eaten up the fat kine. The thin and withered ears had devoured the good ears. The season of rich harvests was over, and the period of famine had begun. All that is squalid and miserable might now be summed up in the word Poet. That word denoted a creature dressed like a scarecrow, familiar with compters and spunging-houses, and perfectly qualified to decide on the comparative merits of the Common Side in the King's bench prison and of Mount Scoundrel in the Fleet. Even the poorest pitied him; and they well might pity him. For if their condition was equally abject, their aspirings were not equally high, nor their sense of insult equally acute. To lodge in a garret up four pair of stairs, to dine in a cellar among footmen out of place, to translate ten hours a day for the wages of a ditcher, to be hunted by bailiffs from one haunt of beggary and pestilence to another, from Grub Street to St. George's

Grub Street authors.

Fields, and from St. George's Fields to the alleys behind St. Martin's church, to sleep on a bulk in June and amidst the ashes of a glass-house in December, to die in an hospital and to be buried in a parish vault, was the fate of more than one writer who, if he had lived thirty years earlier, would have been admitted to the sittings of the Kitcat or the Scriblerus club, would have sat in Parliament, and would have been intrusted with embassies to the High Allies; who, if he had lived in our time, would have found encouragement scarcely less munificent in Albemarle-street or in Paternoster-row.

Characteristics of the "Poets."

As every climate has its peculiar diseases, so every walk of life has its peculiar temptations. The literary character, assuredly, has always had its share of faults, vanity, jealousy, morbid sensibility. To these faults were now superadded the faults which are commonly found in men whose livelihood is precarious, and whose principles are exposed to the trial of severe distress. All the vices of the gambler and of the beggar were blended with those of the author. The prizes in the wretched lottery of book-making were scarcely less ruinous than the blanks. If good fortune came, it came in such a manner that it was almost certain to

be abused. After months of starvation and despair, a full third night or a well-received dedication filled the pocket of the lean, ragged, unwashed poet with guineas. He hastened to enjoy those luxuries with the images of which his mind had been haunted while he was sleeping amidst the cinders and eating potatoes at the Irish ordinary in Shoe Lane. A week of taverns soon qualified him for another year of night-cellars. Such was the life of Savage, of Boyse, and of a crowd of others. Sometimes blazing in gold-laced hats and waistcoats; sometimes lying in bed because their coats had gone to pieces, or wearing paper cravats because their linen was in pawn; sometimes drinking Champagne and Tokay with Betty Careless; sometimes standing at the window of an eating-house in Porridge island, to snuff up the scent of what they could not afford to taste; they knew luxury; they knew beggary; but they never knew comfort. These men were irreclaimable. They looked on a regular and frugal life with the same aversion which an old gipsy or a Mohawk hunter feels for a stationary abode, and for the restraints and securities of civilised communities. They were as untameable, as much wedded to their desolate freedom, as the wild ass. They could no more be broken in to the offices

of social man than the unicorn could be trained to serve and abide by the crib. It was well if they did not, like beasts of a still fiercer race, tear the hands which ministered to their necessities. To assist them was impossible; and the most benevolent of mankind at length became weary of giving relief which was dissipated with the wildest profusion as soon as it had been received. If a sum was bestowed on the wretched adventurer, such as, properly husbanded, might have supplied him for six months, it was instantly spent in strange freaks of sensuality, and, before forty-eight hours had elapsed, the poet was again pestering all his acquaintance for twopence to get a plate of shin of beef at a subterraneous cook-shop. If his friends gave him an asylum in their houses, those houses were forthwith turned into bagnios and taverns. All order was destroyed; all business was suspended. The most good-natured host began to repent of his eagerness to serve a man of genius in distress, when he heard his guest roaring for fresh punch at five o'clock in the morning.

A few eminent writers were more fortunate. Pope had been raised above poverty by the active patronage which, in his youth, both the great political parties had extended to his *Homer*. Young had received the

only pension ever bestowed, to the best of our recollection, by Sir Robert Walpole, as the reward of mere literary merit. One or two of the many poets who attached themselves to the opposition, Thomson in particular and Mallett, obtained, after much severe suffering, the means of subsistence from their political friends. Richardson, like a man of sense, kept his shop; and his shop kept him, which his novels, admirable as they are, would scarcely have done. But nothing could be more deplorable than the state even of the ablest men, who at that time depended for subsistence on their writings. Johnson, Collins, Fielding, and Thomson, were certainly four of the most distinguished persons that England produced during the eighteenth century. It is well known that they were all four arrested for debt.

Into calamities and difficulties such as these Johnson plunged in his twenty-eighth year. From that time till he was three or four and fifty, we have little information respecting him; little, we mean, compared with the full and accurate information which we possess respecting his proceedings and habits towards the close of his life. He emerged at length from cock-lofts and sixpenny ordinaries into the society of the polished and the opulent. His fame was established.

A pension sufficient for his wants had been conferred on him: and he came forth to astonish a generation with which he had almost as little in common as with Frenchmen or Spaniards.

Characteristics of Johnson.

Johnson came among them the solitary specimen of a past age, the last survivor of the genuine race of Grub Street hacks; the last of that generation of authors whose abject misery and whose dissolute manners had furnished inexhaustible matter to the satirical genius of Pope. From nature he had received an uncouth figure, a diseased constitution, and an irritable temper. The manner in which the earlier years of his manhood had been passed had given to his demeanour, and even to his moral character, some peculiarities appalling to the civilised beings who were the companions of his old age. The perverse irregularity of his hours, the slovenliness of his person, his fits of strenuous exertion, interrupted by long intervals of sluggishness, his strange abstinence, and his equally strange voracity, his active benevolence, contrasted with the constant rudeness and the occasional ferocity of his manners in society, made him, in the opinion of

those with whom he lived during the last twenty years of his life, a complete original. An original he was, undoubtedly, in some respects. But if we possessed full information concerning those who shared his early hardships, we should probably find that what we call his singularities of manner were, for the most part, failings which he had in common with the class to which he belonged. He ate at Streatham Park as he had been used to eat behind the screen at St. John's Gate, when he was ashamed to show his ragged clothes. He ate as it was natural that a man should eat, who, during a great part of his life, had passed the morning in doubt whether he should have food for the afternoon. The habits of his early life had accustomed him to bear privation with fortitude, but not to taste pleasure with moderation. He could fast; but, when he did not fast, he tore his dinner like a famished wolf, with the veins swelling on his forehead, and the perspiration running down his cheeks. He scarcely ever took wine. But when he drank it, he drank it greedily and in large tumblers. These were, in fact, mitigated symptoms of that same moral disease which raged with such deadly malignity in his friends Savage and Boyse. The roughness and violence which he showed in society were to be expected from

a man whose temper, not naturally gentle, had been long tried by the bitterest calamities, by the want of meat, of fire, and of clothes, by the importunity of creditors, by the insolence of booksellers, by the derision of fools, by the insincerity of patrons, by that bread which is the bitterest of all food, by those stairs which are the most toilsome of all paths, by that deferred hope which makes the heart sick. Through all these things the ill-dressed, coarse, ungainly pedant had struggled manfully up to eminence and command. It was natural that, in the exercise of his power, he should be "eo immitior, quia toleraverat," that, though his heart was undoubtedly generous and humane, his demeanour in society should be harsh and despotic. For severe distress he had sympathy, and not only sympathy, but munificent relief. But for the suffering which a harsh world inflicts upon a delicate mind he had no pity; for it was a kind of suffering which he could scarcely conceive. He would carry home on his shoulders a sick and starving girl from the streets. He turned his house into a place of refuge for a crowd of wretched old creatures who could find no other asylum; nor could all their peevishness and ingratitude weary out his benevolence. But the pangs of

Sympathy and lack of sympathy.

wounded vanity seemed to him ridiculous; and he scarcely felt sufficient compassion even for the pangs of wounded affection. He had seen and felt so much of sharp misery, that he was not affected by paltry vexations; and he seemed to think that everybody ought to be as much hardened to these vexations as himself. He was angry with Boswell for complaining of a headache, with Mrs. Thrale for grumbling about the dust on the road, or the smell of the kitchen. These were, in his phrase, "foppish lamentations," which people ought to be ashamed to utter in a world so full of sin and sorrow. Goldsmith crying because the *Good-natured Man* had failed, inspired him with no pity. Though his own health was not good, he detested and despised valetudinarians. Pecuniary losses, unless they reduced the loser absolutely to beggary, moved him very little. People whose hearts had been softened by prosperity might weep, he said, for such events, but all that could be expected of a plain man was not to laugh. He was not much moved even by the spectacle of Lady Tavistock dying of a broken heart for the loss of her lord. Such grief he considered as a luxury reserved for the idle and the wealthy. A washerwoman, left a widow with nine small children, would not have sobbed herself to death.

A person who troubled himself so little about small or sentimental grievances was not likely to be very attentive to the feelings of others in the ordinary intercourse of society. He could not understand how a sarcasm or a reprimand could make any man really unhappy. "My dear doctor," said he to Goldsmith, "what harm does it do to a man to call him Holofernes?" "Pooh, ma'am," he exclaimed to Mrs. Carter, "who is the worse for being talked of uncharitably?" Politeness has been well defined as benevolence in small things. Johnson was impolite, not because he wanted benevolence, but because small things appeared smaller to him than to people who had never known what it was to live for fourpence-halfpenny a day.

Lack of politeness.

The characteristic peculiarity of his intellect was the union of great powers with low prejudices. If we judged of him by the best parts of his mind, we should place him almost as high as he was placed by the idolatry of Boswell; if by the worst parts of his mind, we should place him even below Boswell himself. Where he was not under the influence of some strange scruple,

Great powers and low prejudices.

or some domineering passion, which prevented him from boldly and fairly investigating a subject, he was a wary and acute reasoner, a little too much inclined to scepticism, and a little too fond of paradox. No man was less likely to be imposed upon by fallacies in argument or by exaggerated statements of fact. But if, while he was beating down sophisms and exposing false testimony, some childish prejudices, such as would excite laughter in a well-managed nursery, came across him, he was smitten as if by enchantment. His mind dwindled away under the spell from gigantic elevation to dwarfish littleness. Those who had lately been admiring its amplitude and its force were now as much astonished at its strange narrowness and feebleness as the fisherman in the Arabian tale, when he saw the Genie, whose statue had overshadowed the whole sea-coast, and whose might seemed equal to a contest with armies, contract himself to the dimensions of his small prison, and lie there the helpless slave of the charm of Solomon.

Credulity and incredulity.

Johnson was in the habit of sifting with extreme severity the evidence for all stories which were merely odd. But when they were not only odd but miraculous, his severity relaxed. He began to be credulous precisely at the point

where the most credulous people begin to be sceptical. It is curious to observe, both in his writings and in his conversation, the contrast between the disdainful manner in which he rejects unauthenticated anecdotes, even when they are consistent with the general laws of nature, and the respectful manner in which he mentions the wildest stories relating to the invisible world. A man who told him of a waterspout or a meteoric stone generally had the lie direct given him for his pains. A man who told him of a prediction or a dream wonderfully accomplished was sure of a courteous hearing. "Johnson," observed Hogarth, "like King David, says in his haste that all men are liars." "His incredulity," says Mrs. Thrale, "amounted almost to disease." She tells us how he browbeat a gentleman, who gave him an account of a hurricane in the West Indies, and a poor quaker who related some strange circumstance about the red-hot balls fired at the siege of Gibraltar. "It is not so. It cannot be true. Don't tell that story again. You cannot think how poor a figure you make in telling it." He once said, half jestingly, we suppose, that for six months he refused to credit the fact of the earthquake at Lisbon, and that he still believed the extent of the calamity to be greatly exaggerated. Yet he related with a grave face how old

Mr. Cave of St. John's gate saw a ghost, and how this ghost was something of a shadowy being. He went himself on a ghost hunt to Cock Lane, and was angry with John Wesley for not following up another scent of the same kind with proper spirit and perseverance. He rejects the Celtic genealogies and poems without the least hesitation; yet he declares himself willing to believe the stories of second-sight. If he had examined the claims of the Highland seers with half the severity with which he sifted the evidence for the genuineness of *Fingal*, he would, we suspect, have come away from Scotland with a mind fully made up. In his *Lives of the Poets*, we find that he is unwilling to give credit to the accounts of Lord Roscommon's early proficiency in his studies; but he tells with great solemnity an absurd romance about some intelligence preternaturally impressed on the mind of that nobleman. He avows himself to be in great doubt about the truth of the story, and ends by warning his readers not wholly to slight such impressions.

Many of his sentiments on religious subjects are worthy of a liberal and enlarged mind. He could discern clearly enough the folly and meanness of all

bigotry except his own. When he spoke of the scruples of the Puritans, he spoke like a person who had really obtained an insight into the divine philosophy of the New Testament, and who considered Christianity as a noble scheme of government, tending to promote the happiness and to elevate the moral nature of man. The horror which the sectaries felt for cards, Christmas ale, plum-porridge, mince-pies, and dancing bears, excited his contempt. To the arguments urged by some very worthy people against showy dress, he replied with admirable sense and spirit, "Let us not be found, when our Master calls us, stripping the lace off our waistcoats, but the spirit of contention from our souls and tongues. Alas! sir, a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat will not find his way thither the sooner in a grey one." Yet he was himself under the tyranny of scruples as unreasonable as those of Hudibras or Ralpho, and carried his zeal for ceremonies and for ecclesiastical dignities to lengths altogether inconsistent with reason or with Christian charity. He has gravely noted down in his diary that he once committed the sin of drinking coffee on Good Friday. In Scotland, he thought it his duty to pass several months without joining in public worship, solely because the ministers of the kirk had not

Religious ideas.

been ordained by bishops. His mode of estimating the piety of his neighbours was somewhat singular. "Campbell," said he, "is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat: this shows he has good principles." Spain and Sicily must surely contain many pious robbers and well-principled assassins. Johnson could easily see that a Roundhead who named all his children after Solomon's singers, and talked in the House of Commons about seeking the Lord, might be an unprincipled villain, whose religious mummeries only aggravated his guilt. But a man who took off his hat when he passed a church episcopally consecrated must be a good man, a pious man, a man of good principles. Johnson could easily see that those persons who looked on a dance or a laced waistcoat as sinful, deemed most ignobly of the attributes of God and of the ends of revelation. But with what a storm of invective he would have overwhelmed any man who had blamed him for celebrating the redemption of mankind with sugarless tea and butterless buns.

Nobody spoke more contemptuously of the cant of patriotism. Nobody saw more clearly the error of

those who regarded liberty, not as a means, but as an end, and who proposed to themselves, as the object of their pursuit, the prosperity of the state as distinct from the prosperity of the individuals who compose the state. His calm and settled opinion seems to have been, that forms of government have little or no influence on the happiness of society. This opinion, erroneous as it is, ought at least to have preserved him from all intemperance on political questions. It did not, however, preserve him from the lowest, fiercest, and most absurd extravagances of party-spirit, from rants which, in everything but the diction, resembled those of Squire Western. He was, as a politician, half ice and half fire. On the side of his intellect, he was a mere Pococurante, far too apathetic about public affairs, far too sceptical as to the good or evil tendency of any form of polity. His passions, on the contrary, were violent even to slaying, against all who leaned to Whiggish principles. The well-known lines which he inserted in Goldsmith's *Traveller* express what seems to have been his deliberate judgment: —

Political ideas.

> "How small of all that human hearts endure
> That part which kings or laws can cause or cure!"

He had previously put expressions very similar into

the mouth of Rasselas. It is amusing to contrast these passages with the torrents of raving abuse which he poured forth against the Long Parliament and the American Congress. In one of the conversations reported by Boswell this inconsistency displays itself in the most ludicrous manner.

Literary judgments.

The judgments which Johnson passed on books were, in his own time, regarded with superstitious veneration, and, in our time, are generally treated with indiscriminate contempt. They are the judgments of a strong but enslaved understanding. The mind of the critic was hedged round by an uninterrupted fence of prejudices and superstitions. Within his narrow limits, he displayed a vigour and an activity which ought to have enabled him to clear the barrier that confined him.

Johnson decided literary questions like a lawyer, not like a legislator. He never examined foundations where a point was already ruled. His whole code of criticism rested on pure assumption, for which he sometimes quoted a precedent or an authority, but rarely troubled himself to give a reason drawn from the nature of things. He took it for granted that the kind of poetry which flourished in his own time, which he had been accustomed to hear praised from his child-

hood, and which he had himself written with success, was the best kind of poetry. In his biographical work he has repeatedly laid it down as an undeniable proposition that during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the earlier part of the eighteenth, English poetry had been in a constant progress of improvement. Waller, Denham, Dryden, and Pope, had been, according to him, the great reformers. He judged of all works of the imagination by the standard established among his own contemporaries. Though he allowed Homer to have been a greater man than Virgil, he seems to have thought the *Æneid* a greater poem than the *Iliad*. Indeed he well might have thought so; for he preferred Pope's *Iliad* to Homer's. He pronounced that, after Hoole's translation of Tasso, Fairfax's would hardly be reprinted. He could see no merit in our fine old English ballads, and always spoke with the most provoking contempt of Percy's fondness for them. Of the great original works of imagination which appeared during his time, Richardson's novels alone excited his admiration. He could see little or no merit in *Tom Jones*, in *Gulliver's Travels*, or in *Tristram Shandy*. To Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, he vouchsafed only a line of cold commendation, of commendation much colder than what

he has bestowed on the *Creation* of that portentous bore, Sir Richard Blackmore. Gray was, in his dialect, a barren rascal. Churchill was a blockhead. The contempt which he felt for the trash of Macpherson was indeed just; but it was, we suspect, just by chance. He despised the *Fingal* for the very reason which led many men of genius to admire it. He despised it, not because it was essentially commonplace, but because it had a superficial air of originality.

He was undoubtedly an excellent judge of compositions fashioned on his own principles. But when a deeper philosophy was required, when he undertook to pronounce judgment on the works of those great minds which "yield homage only to eternal laws," his failure was ignominious. He criticised Pope's *Epitaphs* excellently. But his observations on Shakespeare's plays and Milton's poems seem to us for the most part as wretched as if they had been written by Rymer himself, whom we take to have been the worst critic that ever lived.

On men and manners, at least on the men and manners of a particular place and a particular age, Johnson had certainly looked with a most observant and dis-

criminating eye. His remarks on the education of children, on marriage, on the economy of families, on the rules of society, are always striking, and generally sound. In his writings, indeed, the knowledge of life which he possessed in an eminent degree is very imperfectly exhibited. Like those unfortunate chiefs of the middle ages who were suffocated by their own chain-mail and cloth of gold, his maxims perish under that load of words which was designed for their defence and their ornament. But it is clear from the remains of his conversation, that he had more of that homely wisdom which nothing but experience and observation can give than any writer since the time of Swift. If he had been content to write as he talked, he might have left books on the practical art of living superior to the *Directions to Servants.*

Social judgments.

Johnson, as Mr. Burke most justly observed, appears far greater in Boswell's books than in his own. His conversation appears to have been quite equal to his writings in matter, and far superior to them in manner. When he talked, he clothed his wit and his sense in forcible and natural

Johnson's style.

expressions. As soon as he took his pen in his hand to write for the public, his style became systematically vicious. All his books are written in a learned language, in a language which nobody hears from his mother or his nurse, in a language in which nobody ever quarrels, or drives bargains, or makes love, in a language in which nobody ever thinks. It is clear that Johnson himself did not think in the dialect in which he wrote. The expressions which came first to his tongue were simple, energetic, and picturesque. When he wrote for publication, he did his sentences out of English into Johnsonese. His letters from the Hebrides to Mrs. Thrale are the original of that work of which the *Journey to the Hebrides* is the translation; and it is amusing to compare the two versions. "When we were taken upstairs," says he in one of his letters, "a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie." This incident is recorded in the *Journey* as follows: "Out of one of the beds on which we were to repose, started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge." Sometimes Johnson translated aloud. "*The Rehearsal*," he said very unjustly, "has not wit enough to keep it sweet;" then, after a pause, "it has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction."

Mannerism is pardonable, and is sometimes even agreeable, when the manner, though vicious, is natural. Few readers, for example, would be willing to part with the mannerism of Milton or of Burke. But a mannerism which does not sit easy on the mannerist, which has been adopted on principle, and which can be sustained only by constant effort, is always offensive. And such is the mannerism of Johnson. *Mannerism.*

The characteristic faults of his style are so familiar to all our readers, and have been so often burlesqued, that it is almost superfluous to point them out. It is well known that he made less use than any other eminent writer of those strong plain words, Anglo-Saxon or Norman-French, of which the roots lie in the inmost depths of our language; and that he felt a vicious partiality for terms which, long after our own speech had been fixed, were borrowed from the Greek and Latin, and which, therefore, even when lawfully naturalised, must be considered as born aliens, not entitled to rank with the king's English. His constant practice of padding out a sentence with useless epithets, till it became as stiff as the bust of an exquisite, his antithetical forms of expression, constantly employed even where there is no opposition in the ideas expressed,

his big words wasted on little things, his harsh inversions, so widely different from those graceful and easy inversions which give variety, spirit, and sweetness to the expression of our great old writers, all these peculiarities have been imitated by his admirers and parodied by his assailants, till the public has become sick of the subject.

Goldsmith said to him, very wittily and very justly, "If you were to write a fable about little fishes, doctor, you would make the little fishes talk like whales." No man surely ever had so little talent for personation as Johnson. Whether he wrote in the character of a disappointed legacy-hunter or an empty town fop, of a crazy virtuoso or a flippant coquette, he wrote in the same pompous and unbending style. His speech, like Sir Piercy Shafton's Euphuistic eloquence, bewrayed him under every disguise. Euphelia and Rhodoclea talk as finely as Imlac the poet, or Seged, Emperor of Ethiopia. The gay Cornelia describes her reception at the country-house of her relations, in such terms as these: "I was surprised, after the civilities of my first reception, to find, instead of the leisure and tranquillity which a rural life always promises, and, if well conducted, might always afford, a confused wildness of care, and a tumultuous hurry

Examples of his style.

of diligence, by which every face was clouded, and every motion agitated." The gentle Tranquilla informs us, that she "had not passed the earlier part of life without the flattery of courtship, and the joys of triumph; but had danced the round of gaiety amidst the murmurs of envy and the gratulations of applause, had been attended from pleasure to pleasure by the great, the sprightly, and the vain, and had seen her regard solicited by the obsequiousness of gallantry, the gaiety of wit, and the timidity of love." Surely Sir John Falstaff himself did not wear his petticoats with a worse grace. The reader may well cry out, with honest Sir Hugh Evans, "I like not when a 'oman has a great peard: I spy a great peard under her muffler."

APPENDIX A

II. Selections from Carlyle's Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson. — Fraser's Magazine, 1832.

[This is in a way an answer to Macaulay's Essay.]

The great man does, in good truth, belong to his own age; nay, more so than any other man; being properly the synopsis and epitome of such age with its interests and influences: but belongs likewise to all ages, otherwise he is not great. What was transitory in him passes away; and an immortal part remains, the significance of which is in strict speech inexhaustible, — as that of every *real* object is. Aloft, conspicuous, on his enduring basis, he stands there, serene, unaltering; silently addresses to every new generation a new lesson and monition. Well is his Life worth writing, worth interpreting; and ever, in the new dialect of new times, of re-writing and re-interpreting.

Of such chosen men was Samuel Johnson: not ranking among the highest, or even the high, yet distinctly admitted into that sacred band; whose existence was no idle Dream, but a Reality which he

transacted *awake ;* nowise a Clotheshorse and Patent Digester, but a genuine Man. By nature he was gifted for the noblest of earthly tasks, that of Priesthood, and Guidance of mankind; by destiny, moreover, he was appointed to this task, and did actually, according to strength, fulfil the same: so that always the question, *How ; in what spirit ; under what shape ?* remains for us to be asked and answered concerning him.

Johnson's contradictions.

The Contradiction which yawns wide enough in every Life, which it is the meaning and task of Life to reconcile, was in Johnson's wider than in most. Seldom, for any man, has the contrast between the ethereal heavenward side of things, and the dark sordid earthward, been more glaring: whether we look at Nature's work with him or Fortune's, from first to last, heterogeneity, as of sunbeams and miry clay, is on all hands manifest. Whereby indeed, only this was declared, That *much Life* had been given him; many things to triumph over, a great work to *do.* Happily also he did it; better than the most.

Nature had given him a high, keen-visioned, almost

poetic soul; yet withal imprisoned it in an inert, unsightly body: he that could never rest had not limbs that would move with him, but only roll and waddle: the inward eye, all-penetrating, all-embracing, must look through bodily windows that were dim, half-blinded; he so loved men, and 'never once *saw* the human face divine'! Not less did he prize the love of men; he was eminently social; the approbation of his fellows was dear to him, 'valuable,' as he owned, 'if from the meanest of human beings:' yet the first impression he produced on every man was to be one of aversion, almost of disgust. By Nature it was farther ordered that the imperious Johnson should be born poor: the ruler-soul, strong in its native royalty, generous, uncontrollable, like the lion of the woods, was to be housed then in such a dwelling-place: of Disfigurement, Disease, and lastly of a Poverty which itself made him the servant of servants. Thus was the born king likewise a born slave: the divine spirit of Music must awake imprisoned amid dull-croaking universal Discords; the Ariel finds himself encased in the coarse hulls of a Caliban. So is it more or less, we know (and thou, O Reader, knowest and feelest even now), with all men: yet with the fewest men in any such degree as with Johnson.

In fact, if we look seriously into the condition of Authorship at that period, we shall find that Johnson had undertaken one of the ruggedest of all possible enterprises; that here as elsewhere Fortune had given him unspeakable Contradictions to reconcile. For a man of Johnson's stamp, the Problem was twofold: *First*, not only as the humble but indispensable condition of all else, to keep himself, if so might be, *alive;* but *secondly*, to keep himself alive by speaking forth the *Truth* that was in him, and speaking it *truly*, that is, in the clearest and fittest utterance the Heavens had enabled him to give it, let the Earth say to this what she liked. Of which twofold Problem if it be hard to solve either member separately, how incalculably more so to solve it, when both are conjoined, and work with endless complication into one another! He that finds himself already *kept alive* can sometimes (unhappily not always) speak a little truth; he that finds himself able and willing, to all lengths, to *speak lies*, may, by watching how the wind sits, scrape together a livelihood, sometimes of great splendor: he, again, who finds himself provided with *neither* endowment, has but a ticklish game to play, and shall have praise if he win it. Let us look a little at both faces of the matter; and see

"Authorship" in Johnson's time.

what front they then offered our Adventurer, what front he offered them.

Patron and bookseller.

At the time of Johnson's appearance on the field, Literature, in many senses, was in a transitional state; chiefly in this sense, as respects the pecuniary subsistence of its cultivators. It was in the very act of passing from the protection of Patrons into that of the Public; no longer to supply its necessities by laudatory Dedications to the Great, but by judicious Bargains with the Booksellers. This happy change has been much sung and celebrated; many a 'lord of the lion heart and eagle eye' looking back with scorn enough on the bygone system of Dependency: so that now it were perhaps well to consider, for a moment, what good might also be in it, what gratitude we owe it. That a good was in it, admits not of doubt. Whatsoever has existed has had its value: without some truth and worth lying in it, the thing could not have hung together, and been the organ and sustenance, and method of action, for men that reasoned and were alive. Translate a Falsehood which is wholly false into Practice, the result comes out *zero;* there is no fruit or issue to be derived from it. That in an age when a Nobleman was still noble, still with his wealth the protector of worthy and

humane things, and still venerated as such, a poor Man of Genius, his brother in nobleness, should, with unfeigned reverence, address him and say: "I have found Wisdom here, and would fain proclaim it abroad; wilt thou, of thy abundance, afford me the means?" — in all this there was no baseness; it was wholly an honest proposal, which a free man might make, and a free man listen to. So might a Tasso, with a *Gerusalemme* in his hand or in his head, speak to a Duke of Ferrara; so might a Shakspeare to his Southampton; and Continental Artists generally to their rich Protectors, — in some countries, down almost to these days. It was only when the reverence became *feigned* that baseness entered into the transaction on both sides; and, indeed, flourished there with rapid luxuriance, till that became disgraceful for a Dryden, which a Shakspeare could once practise without offence.

Neither, it is very true, was the new way of Bookseller Mæcenasship worthless; which opened itself at this juncture, for the most important of all transport-trades, now when the old way had become too miry and impassable. Remark, moreover, how this second sort of Mæcenasship, after carrying us through nearly a century of Literary Time, appears now to have well-nigh discharged *its* function also; and to be working

pretty rapidly toward some *third* method, the exact conditions of which are yet nowise visible. Thus all things have their end; and we should part with them all, not in anger, but in peace. The Bookseller-System, during its peculiar century, the whole of the eighteenth, did carry us handsomely along, and many good Works it has left us; and many good Men it maintained: if it is now expiring by PUFFERY, as the Patronage-System did by FLATTERY (for *Lying* is ever the forerunner of Death, nay is itself Death), let us not forget its benefits; how it nursed Literature through boyhood and school-years, as Patronage had wrapped it in soft swaddling-bands;—till now we see it about to put on the *toga virilis*, could it but *find* any such!

There is tolerable traveling on the beaten road, run how it may; only on the new road not yet leveled and paved, and on the old road all broken into ruts and quagmires, is the traveling bad or impracticable. The difficulty lies always in the *transition* from one method to another. In which state it was that Johnson now found Literature; and out of which, let us also say, he manfully carried it. What remarkable mortal *first paid copyright* in England we have not ascertained; perhaps, for almost a century before, some scarce visible or ponderable pittance of wages had occasionally

been yielded by the Seller of Books to the Writer of them: the original Covenant, stipulating to produce *Paradise Lost* on the one hand, and *Five Pounds Sterling* on the other, still lies (we have been told) in black-on-white, for inspection and purchase by the curious, at a Bookshop in Chancery-Lane. Thus had the matter gone on, in a mixed confused way, for some threescore years; — as ever, in such things, the old system *overlaps* the new, by some generation or two, and only dies quite out when the new has got a complete organization and weather-worthy surface of its own. Among the first Authors, the very first of any significance, who lived by the day's wages of his craft, and composedly faced the world on that basis, was Samuel Johnson.

At the time of Johnson's appearance there were still two ways on which an Author might attempt proceeding: there were the Mæcenases proper in the West End of London; and the Mæcenases virtual of St. John's Gate and Paternoster Row. To a considerate man it might seem uncertain which method were preferable: neither had very high attractions; the Patron's aid was now wellnigh *necessarily* polluted by sycophancy, before it could come to hand; the Bookseller's was deformed with greedy stupidity, not to say

entire wooden-headedness and disgust (so that an Osborne even required to be knocked down, by an author of spirit), and could barely keep the thread of life together. The one was the wages of suffering and poverty; the other, unless you gave strict heed to it, the wages of sin. In time, Johnson had opportunity of looking into both methods, and ascertaining what they were; but found, at first trial, that the former would in nowise do for him.

Johnson and "Truth."

Little less contradictory was that other branch of the twofold Problem now set before Johnson: the speaking forth of *Truth*. Nay, taken by itself, it had in those days become so complex as to puzzle strongest heads, with nothing else imposed on them for solution; and even to turn high heads of that sort into mere hollow *vizards*, speaking neither truth nor falsehood, nor anything but what the Prompter and Player (ὑποκριτής) put into them. Alas! for poor Johnson Contradiction abounded; in spirituals and in temporals, within and without. Born with the strongest unconquerable love of just Insight, he must begin to live and learn in a scene where Prejudice flourishes with rank luxuriance. Eng-

land was all confused enough, sightless and yet restless, take it where you would; but figure the best intellect in England nursed up to manhood in the idol-cavern of a poor Tradesman's house, in the cathedral city of Lichfield!

It was wholly a divided age, that of Johnson; Unity existed nowhere, in its Heaven, or in its Earth. Society, through every fibre, was rent asunder: all things, it was then becoming visible, but could not then be understood, were moving onwards, with an impulse received ages before, yet now first with a decisive rapidity, towards that great chaotic gulf, where, whether in the shape of French Revolutions, Reform Bills, or what shape soever, bloody or bloodless, the descent and engulfment assume, we now see them weltering and boiling. Already Cant, as once before hinted, had begun to play its wonderful part, for the hour was come: two ghastly Apparitions, unreal *simulacra* both, HYPOCRISY and ATHEISM, are already, in silence, parting the world. Opinion and Action, which should live together as wedded pair, 'one flesh,' more properly as Soul and Body, have commenced their open quarrel, and are suing for a separate maintenance,

— as if they could exist separately. To the earnest mind, in any position, firm footing and a life of Truth was becoming daily more difficult: in Johnson's position it was more difficult than in almost any other.

Religion.

If, as for a devout nature was inevitable and indispensable, he looked up to Religion, as to the polestar of his voyage, already there was no *fixed* polestar any longer visible; but two stars, a whole constellation of stars, each proclaiming itself as the true. There was the red portentous comet-star of Infidelity; the dim fixed-star, burning ever dimmer, uncertain now whether not an atmospheric *meteor*, of Orthodoxy: which of these to choose? The keener intellects of Europe had, almost without exception, ranged themselves under the former: for some half century, it had been the general effort of European speculation to proclaim that Destruction of Falsehood was the only Truth; daily had Denial waxed stronger and stronger, Belief sunk more and more into decay. From our Bolingbrokes and Tolands the sceptical fever had passed into France, into Scotland; and already it smouldered, far and wide, secretly eating out the heart of England. Bayle had played his part; Voltaire, on a wider theatre, was playing his, — Johnson's senior by some

fifteen years: Hume and Johnson were children almost of the same year. To this keener order of intellects did Johnson's indisputably belong: was he to join them; was he to oppose them? A complicated question: for, alas, the Church itself is no longer, even to him, wholly of true adamant, but of adamant and baked mud conjoined: the zealously Devout has to find his Church tottering; and paused amazed to see, instead of inspired Priest, many a swine-feeding Trulliber ministering at her altar. It is not the least curious of the incoherences which Johnson had to reconcile, that, though by nature contemptuous and incredulous, he was, at that time of day, to find his safety and glory in defending, with his whole might, the traditions of the elders.

Politics.

Not less perplexingly intricate, and on both sides hollow or questionable, was the aspect of Politics. Whigs struggling blindly forward, Tories holding blindly back; each with some forecast of a half truth; neither with any forecast of the whole! Admire here this other Contradiction in the life of Johnson; that, though the most ungovernable, and in practice the most independent of men, he must

be a Jacobite and worshiper of the Divine Right. In politics also there are Irreconcilables enough for him. As, indeed, how could it be otherwise? For when Religion is torn asunder, and the very heart of man's existence set against itself, then in all subordinate departments there must needs be hollowness, incoherence.

Johnson's problem.

Such was that same 'twofold Problem' set before Samuel Johnson. Consider all these moral difficulties; and add to them the fearful aggravation, which lay in that other circumstance, that he needed a continual appeal to the Public, must continually produce a certain impression and conviction on the Public; that, if he did not, he ceased to have 'provision for the day that was passing over him,' he could not any longer live! How a vulgar character, once launched into this wild element; driven onwards by Fear and Famine; without other aim than to clutch what Provender (of Enjoyment in any kind) he could get, always if possible keeping *quite* clear of the Gallows and Pillory, that is to say, minding heedfully both 'person' and 'character,'—would have floated hither and thither in it; and contrived to eat some three repasts daily, and wear some

three suits yearly, and then to depart and disappear, having consumed his last ration: all this might be worth knowing, but were in itself a trivial knowledge. How a noble man, resolute for the Truth, to whom Shams and Lies were once for all an abomination, was to act in it: *here* lay the mystery. By what methods, by what gifts of eye and hand, does a heroic Samuel Johnson, now when cast forth into that waste Chaos of Authorship, maddest of things, a mingled Phlegethon and Fleetditch, with its floating lumber, and sea-krakens, and mud-spectres, — shape himself a voyage; of the *transient* driftwood, and the *enduring* iron, build him a sea-worthy Life-boat, and sail therein, undrowned, unpolluted, through the roaring 'mother of dead dogs,' onwards to an eternal Landmark, and City that hath foundations? This high question is even the one answered in Boswell's Book; which Book we therefore, not so falsely, have named a *Heroic Poem;* for in it there lies the whole argument of such. Glory to our brave Samuel! He accomplished this wonderful Problem; and now through long generations we point to him, and say: 'Here also was a Man; let the world once more have assurance of a Man!'

Had there been in Johnson, now when afloat on that

confusion worse confounded of grandeur and squalor, no light but an earthly outward one, he too must have made shipwreck. With his diseased body, and vehement voracious heart, how easy for him to become a *carpe-diem* Philosopher, like the rest, and live and die as miserably as any Boyce of that Brotherhood! But happily there was a higher light for him; shining as a lamp to his path; which, in all paths, would teach him to act and walk not as a fool, but as wise, and in those evil days too, 'redeeming the time.' Under dimmer or clearer manifestations, a Truth had been revealed to him: 'I also am a Man; even in this unutterable element of Authorship, I may live as beseems a Man!' That Wrong is not only different from Right, but that it is in strict scientific terms *infinitely* different; even as the gaining of the whole world set against the losing of one's own soul, or (as Johnson had it) a Heaven set against a Hell; that in all situations out of the Pit of Tophet, wherein a living Man has stood or can stand, there is actually a Prize of quite *infinite* value placed within his reach, namely a *Duty* for him to do: this highest Gospel, which forms the basis and worth of all other Gospels whatsoever, had been revealed to Samuel Johnson; and the man had believed it, and

Johnson's "light."

laid it faithfully to heart. Such knowledge of the *transcendental*, immeasurable character of Duty we call the basis of all Gospels, the essence of all Religion: he who with his whole soul knows not this, as yet knows nothing, as yet *is* properly nothing.

Johnson's religion.

This, happily for him, Johnson was one of those that knew: under a certain authentic Symbol it stood forever present to his eyes: a Symbol, indeed, waxing old as doth a garment; yet which had guided forward, as their Banner and celestial Pillar of Fire, innumerable saints and witnesses, the fathers of our modern world; and for him also had still a sacred significance. It does not appear that at any time Johnson was what we call irreligious: but in his sorrows and isolation, when hope died away, and only a long vista of suffering and toil lay before him to the end, then first did Religion shine forth in its meek, everlasting clearness; even as the stars do in black night, which in the daytime and dusk were hidden by inferior lights. How a true man, in the midst of errors and uncertainties, shall work out for himself a sure Life-truth: and, adjusting the transient to the eternal, amid the fragments of ruined Temples build up with toil and pain a little Altar for himself, and worship there; how

Samuel Johnson, in the era of Voltaire, can purify and fortify his soul, and hold real communion with the Highest, 'in the Church of St. Clement Danes:' this too stands all unfolded in his Biography, and is among the most touching and memorable things there; a thing to be looked at with pity, admiration, awe. Johnson's Religion was as the light of life to him; without it his heart was all sick, dark, and had no guidance left.

Character and attainments.

He is now enlisted, or impressed, into that unspeakable shoeblack-seraph Army of Authors; but can feel hereby that he fights under a celestial flag, and will quit him like a man. The first grand requisite, an assured heart, he therefore has: what his outward equipments and accoutrements are, is the next question; an important though inferior one. His intellectual stock, intrinsically viewed, is perhaps inconsiderable; the furnishings of an English School and English University; good knowledge of the Latin tongue, a more uncertain one of Greek: this is a rather slender stock of Education wherewith to front the world. But then it is to be remembered that his world was England;

that such was the culture England commonly supplied and expected. Besides, Johnson has been a voracious reader, though a desultory one, and oftenest in strange, scholastic, too obsolete Libraries; he has also rubbed shoulders with the press of Actual Life for some thirty years now: views or hallucinations of innumerable things are weltering to and fro in him. Above all, be his weapons what they may, he has an arm that can wield them. Nature has given him her choicest gift, —an open eye and heart. He will look on the world, wheresoever he can catch a glimpse of it, with eager curiosity: to the last, we find this a striking characteristic of him; for all human interests he has a sense; the meanest handicraftsman could interest him, even in extreme age, by speaking of his craft: the ways of men are all interesting to him; any human thing that he did not know, he wished to know. Reflection, moreover, Meditation, was what he practised incessantly, with or without his will: for the mind of the man was earnest, deep as well as humane. Thus would the world, such fragments of it as he could survey, form itself, or continually tend to form itself, into a coherent Whole; on any and on all phases of which, his vote and voice must be well worth listening to. As a speaker of the Word, he will speak real words;

no idle jargon or hollow triviality will issue from him. His aim too is clear, attainable; that of *working for his wages :* let him *do* this honestly, and all else will follow of its own accord.

Poverty, Distress, and as yet Obscurity, are his companions: so poor is he that his Wife must leave him, and seek shelter among other relations; Johnson's household has accommodations for one inmate only. To all his ever-varying, ever-recurring troubles, moreover, must be added this continual one of ill-health and its concomitant depressiveness: a galling load, which would have crushed most common mortals into desperation, is his appointed ballast and life-burden; he 'could not remember the day he had passed free from pain.' Nevertheless, Life, as we said before, is always Life: a healthy soul, imprison it as you will, in squalid garrets, shabby coat, bodily sickness, or whatever else, will assert its heaven-granted indefeasible Freedom, its right to conquer difficulties, to do work, even to feel gladness. Johnson does not whine over his existence, but manfully makes the most and best of it. 'He said, a man might live in a garret

Poverty and obscurity.

at eighteenpence a-week: few people would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say, "Sir, I am to be found at such a place." By spending threepence in a coffee-house, he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread-and-milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean-shirt day* he went abroad and paid visits.' Think by whom and of whom this was uttered, and ask then, Whether there is more pathos in it than in a whole circulating-library of *Giaours* and *Harolds*, or less pathos?

Success and fame.

Obscurity, however, was, in Johnson's case, whether a light or heavy evil, likely to be no lasting one. He is animated by the spirit of a true *workman*, resolute to do his work well; and he *does* his work well; all his work, that of writing, that of living. A man of this stamp is unhappily not so common in the literary or in any other department of the world, that he can continue always unnoticed. By slow degrees, Johnson emerges; looming, at first, huge and dim in the eye of an observant few; at last disclosed, in his real proportions, to the eye of the whole world, and encircled with a 'light-

nimbus' of glory, so that whoso is not blind must and shall behold him. By slow degrees, we said; for this also is notable; slow but sure: as his fame waxes not by exaggerated clamor of what he *seems* to be, but by better and better insight of what he *is*, so it will last and stand wearing, being genuine. Thus indeed is it always, or nearly always, with true fame. The heavenly Luminary rises amid vapors; stargazers enough must scan it with critical telescopes; it makes no blazing, the world can either look at it, or forbear looking at it; not till after a time and times does its celestial eternal nature become indubitable. Pleasant, on the other hand, is the blazing of a Tarbarrel; the crowd dance merrily round it, with loud huzzaing, universal three-times-three, and, like Homer's peasants, 'bless the useful light:' but unhappily it so soon ends in darkness, foul choking smoke; and is kicked into the gutters, a nameless imbroglio of charred staves, pitch-cinders, and *vomissement du diable!*

If Destiny had beaten hard on poor Samuel, and did never cease to visit him too roughly, yet the last section of his Life might be pronounced victorious, and on the whole happy. He was not idle; but now no longer

goaded-on by want; the light which had shone irradiating the dark haunts of Poverty, now illuminates the circles of Wealth, of a certain culture and elegant intelligence; he who had once been admitted to speak with Edmund Cave and Tobacco Browne, now admits a Reynolds and a Burke to speak with him. Loving friends are there; Listeners, even Answerers: the fruit of his long labors lies round him in fair legible Writings, of Philosophy, Eloquence, Morality, Philology; some excellent, all worthy and genuine Works; for which too, a deep, earnest murmur of thanks reaches him from all ends of his Fatherland. Nay, there are works of Goodness, of undying Mercy, which even he has possessed the power to do: 'What I gave I have; what I spent I had!' Early friends had long sunk into the grave; yet in his soul they ever lived, fresh and clear, with soft pious breathings towards them, not without a still hope of one day meeting them again in purer union. Such was Johnson's Life: the victorious Battle of a free, true Man. Finally he died the death of the free and true: a dark cloud of Death, solemn and not untinged with halos of immortal Hope, 'took him away,' and our eyes could no longer behold him; but can still behold the trace and impress of his courageous

honest spirit, deep-legible in the World's Business, wheresoever he walked and was.

Works and life.

To estimate the quantity of Work that Johnson performed, how much poorer the World were had it wanted him, can, as in all such cases, never be accurately done; cannot, till after some longer space, be approximately done. All work is as seed sown; it grows and spreads, and sows itself anew, and so, in endless palingenesia, lives and works. To Johnson's Writings, good and solid and still profitable as they are, we have already rated his Life and Conversation as superior. By the one and by the other, who shall compute what effects have been produced, and are still, and into deep Time, producing?

Valor.

If we ask now, by what endowment it mainly was that Johnson realized such a Life for himself and others; what quality of character the main phenomena of his Life may be most naturally deduced from, and his other qualities most naturally subordinated to, in our conception of him, perhaps the answer were: The quality of Courage, of Valor; that Johnson was a Brave Man. . . .

Johnson, in the eighteenth century, and as Man of Letters, was one of such; and, in good truth, 'the bravest of the brave.' What mortal could have more to war with? Yet, as we saw, he yielded not, faltered not; he fought, and even, such was his blessedness, prevailed. Whoso will understand what it is to have a man's heart may find that, since the time of John Milton, no braver heart had beat in any English bosom than Samuel Johnson now bore. Observe too that he never called himself brave, never felt himself to be so; the more completely *was* so. No Giant Despair, no Golgotha Death-dance or Sorcerer's-Sabbath of 'Literary Life in London,' appals this pilgrim; he works resolutely for deliverance; in still defiance steps stoutly along. The thing that is given him to do, he can make himself do; what is to be endured, he can endure in silence.

Closely connected with this quality of Valor, partly as springing from it, partly as protected by it, are the more recognizable qualities of Truthfulness in word and thought, and Honesty in action. There is a reciprocity of influence here: for as the realizing of Truthfulness and Honesty is the lifelight and great aim of Valor, so without Valor they cannot, in

anywise, be realized. Now, in spite of all practical short-comings, no one that sees into the signifi-

Truthfulness.

cance of Johnson will say that his prime object was not Truth. In conversation doubtless you may observe him, on occasion, fighting as if for victory;—and must pardon these ebulliences of a careless hour, which were not without temptation and provocation. Remark likewise two things: that such prize-arguings were ever on merely superficial debatable questions; and then that they were argued generally by the fair laws of battle and logic-fence, by one cunning in that same. If their purpose was excusable, their effect was harmless, perhaps beneficial: that of taming noisy mediocrity, and showing it another side of a debatable matter: to see *both* sides of which was, for the first time, to see the Truth of it. In his Writings themselves are errors enough, crabbed prepossessions enough; yet these also of a quite extraneous and accidental nature, nowhere a wilful shutting of the eyes to the Truth. Nay, is there not everywhere a heartfelt discernment, singular, almost admirable, if we consider through what confused conflicting lights and hallucinations it had to be attained, of the highest everlasting Truth, and beginning of all Truths: this namely, that man is ever, and even in the age of Wilkes

and Whitefield, a Revelation of God to man; and lives, moves, and has his being, in Truth only; is either true, or, in strict speech, *is* not at all?

Quite spotless, on the other hand, is Johnson's love of Truth, if we look at it as expressed in Practice, as what we have named Honesty of action. 'Clear your mind of Cant;' *clear* it, throw Cant utterly away: such was his emphatic, repeated precept; and did not he himself faithfully conform to it? The Life of this man has been, as it were, turned inside out, and examined with microscopes by friend and foe; yet was there no Lie found in him. His Doings and Writings are not *shows* but *performances:* you may weigh them in the balance, and they will stand weight. Not a line, not a sentence is dishonestly done, is other than it pretends to be. Alas! and he wrote not out of inward inspiration, but to earn his wages: and with that grand perennial tide of 'popular delusion' flowing by; in whose waters he nevertheless refused to fish, to whose rich oyster-beds the dive was too muddy for him. Observe, again, with what innate hatred of Cant, he takes for himself, and offers to others, the lowest possible view of his business, which he followed with such nobleness. Motive for writing he had none, as he often said, but money; and yet he

wrote *so*. Into the region of Poetic Art he indeed never rose; there was no *ideal* without him, avowing itself in his work: the nobler was that unavowed *ideal* which lay within him, and commanded, saying, Work out thy Artisanship in the spirit of an Artist! They who talk loudest about the dignity of Art, and fancy that they too are Artistic guild-brethren, and of the Celestials, — let them consider well what manner of man this was, who felt himself to be only a hired day-laborer. A laborer that was worthy of his hire; that has labored not as an eye-servant, but as one found faithful!

Mercy and charity.

That Mercy can dwell only with Valor, is an old sentiment or proposition; which in Johnson again receives confirmation. Few men on record have had a more merciful, tenderly affectionate nature than old Samuel. He was called the Bear; and did indeed too often look, and roar, like one; being forced to it in his own defence: yet within that shaggy exterior of his there beat a heart warm as a mother's, soft as a little child's. Nay, generally his very roaring was but the anger of affection: the rage of a Bear, if you will; but of a Bear bereaved of her whelps.

Touch his Religion, glance at the Church of England, or the Divine Right; and he was upon you! These things were his Symbols of all that was good and precious for men; his very Ark of the Covenant: whoso laid hand on them tore asunder his heart of hearts. Not out of hatred to the opponent, but of love to the thing opposed, did Johnson grow cruel, fiercely contradictory: this is an important distinction; never to be forgotten in our censure of his conversational outrages. But observe also with what humanity, what openness of love, he can attach himself to all things: to a blind old woman, to a Doctor Levett, to a cat 'Hodge.' 'His thoughts in the latter part of his life were frequently employed on his deceased friends; he often muttered these or suchlike sentences: "Poor man! and then he died."' How he patiently converts his poor home into a Lazaretto; endures, for long years, the contradiction of the miserable and unreasonable; with him unconnected, save that they had no other to yield them refuge! Generous old man! Worldly possession he had little; yet of this he gives freely; from his own hard-earned shilling, the half-pence for the poor, that 'waited his coming out,' are not withheld: the poor 'waited the coming out' of one not quite so poor! A Sterne can write sentimentalities on

Dead Asses: Johnson has a rough voice; but he finds the wretched Daughter of Vice fallen down in the streets; carries her home on his own shoulders, and like a good Samaritan gives help to the help-needing, worthy or unworthy. Ought not Charity, even in that sense, to cover a multitude of sins? No Penny-a-week Committee-Lady, no manager of Soup-Kitchens, dancer at Charity-Balls, was this rugged, stern-visaged man: but where, in all England, could there have been found another soul so full of Pity, a hand so heaven-like bounteous as his? The widow's mite, we know, was greater than all the other gifts.

Perhaps it is this divine feeling of Affection, throughout manifested, that principally attracts us towards Johnson. A true brother of men is he; and filial lover of the Earth; who, with little bright spots of Attachment, 'where lives and works some loved one,' has beautified 'this rough solitary Earth into a peopled garden.' Lichfield, with its mostly dull and limited inhabitants, is, to the last, one of the sunny islets for him: *Salve, magna parens!* Or read those Letters on his Mother's death: what a genuine solemn grief and pity lies recorded there; a looking back into the Past, unspeakably mournful, unspeakably tender.

That this so keen-loving, soft-trembling Affectionateness, the inmost essence of his being, must have looked forth, in one form or another, through Johnson's whole character, practical and intellectual, modifying both, is not to be doubted. Yet through what singular distortions and superstitions, moping melancholies, blind habits, whims about 'entering with the right foot,' and 'touching every post as he walked along;' and all the other mad chaotic lumber of a brain that, with sun-clear intellect, hovered forever on the verge of insanity, — must that same inmost essence have looked forth; unrecognizable to all but the most observant! Accordingly it was not recognized; Johnson passed not for a fine nature, but for a dull, almost brutal one. Might not, for example, the first-fruit of such a Lovingness, coupled with his quick Insight, have been expected to be a peculiarly courteous demeanor as man among men? In Johnson's 'Politeness,' which he often, to the wonder of some, asserted to be great, there was indeed somewhat that needed explanation. Nevertheless, if he insisted always on handing lady-visitors to their carriage; though with the certainty of collecting a mob of gazers in Fleet Street, — as might well be, the beau having on, by way of court-dress, 'his rusty

Politeness.

brown morning suit, a pair of old shoes for slippers, a little shriveled wig sticking on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees of his breeches hanging loose:' — in all this we can see the spirit of true Politeness, only shining through a strange medium. Thus again, in his apartments, at one time, there were unfortunately no chairs. 'A gentleman who frequently visited him whilst writing his *Idlers*, constantly found him at his desk, sitting on one with three legs; and on rising from it, he remarked that Johnson never forgot its defect; but would either hold it in his hand, or place it with great composure against some support; taking no notice of its imperfection to his visitor,' — who meanwhile, we suppose, sat upon folios, or in the sartorial fashion. 'It was remarkable in Johnson,' continues Miss Reynolds (*Renny dear*), 'that no external circumstances ever prompted him to make any apology, or to seem even sensible of their existence. Whether this was the effect of philosophic pride, or of some partial notion of his respecting high-breeding, is doubtful.' That it *was*, for one thing, the effect of genuine Politeness, is nowise doubtful. Not of the Pharisaical Brummellean Politeness, which would suffer crucifixion rather than ask twice for soup: but the noble universal Politeness

of a man that knows the dignity of men, and feels his own; such as may be seen in the patriarchal bearing of an Indian Sachem; such as Johnson himself exhibited, when a sudden chance brought him into dialogue with his King. To us, with our view of the man, it nowise appears strange that he should have boasted himself cunning in the laws of Politeness; nor, 'stranger still,' habitually attentive to practise them.

Prejudices.

More legibly is this influence of the Loving heart to be traced in his intellectual character. What, indeed, is the beginning of intellect, the first inducement to the exercise thereof, but attraction towards somewhat, *affection* for it? Thus too who ever saw or will see any true talent, not to speak of genius, the foundation of which is not goodness, love? From Johnson's strength of Affection, we deduce many of his intellectual peculiarities; especially that threatening array of perversions, known under the name of 'Johnson's Prejudices.' Looking well into the root from which these sprang, we have long ceased to view them with hostility, can pardon and reverently pity them. Consider with what force

early-imbibed opinions must have clung to a soul of this Affection. Those evil-famed Prejudices of his, that Jacobitism, Church-of-Englandism, hatred of the Scotch, belief in Witches, and suchlike, what were they but the ordinary beliefs of well-doing, well-meaning provincial Englishmen in that day? First gathered by his Father's hearth, round the kind 'country fires' of native Staffordshire, they grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength; they were hallowed by fondest sacred recollections; to part with them was parting with his heart's blood. If the man who has no strength of Affection, strength of Belief, have no strength of Prejudice, let him thank Heaven for it, but to himself take small thanks.

Melancholy it was, indeed, that the noble Johnson could not work himself loose from these adhesions; that he could only purify them, and wear them with some nobleness. Yet let us understand how they grew out from the very centre of his being: nay, moreover, how they came to cohere in him with what formed the business and worth of his Life, the sum of his whole Spiritual Endeavor. For it is on the same ground that he became throughout an Edifier and Repairer, not, as the others of his make were, a Puller-down; that in an age of universal Scepticism, England

was still to produce its Believer. Mark too his candor even here; while a Dr. Adams, with placid surprise, asks, "Have we not evidence enough of the soul's immortality?" Johnson answers, "I wish for more."

But the truth is, in Prejudice; as in all things, Johnson was the product of England; one of those '*good* yeomen whose limbs were made in England:' alas, the last of *such* Invincibles, their day being now done! His culture is wholly English; that not of a Thinker but of a 'Scholar:' his interests are wholly English; he sees and knows nothing but England; he is the John Bull of Spiritual Europe: let him live, love him, as he was and could not but be!

APPENDIX B

JOHNSON AS A MORALIST

Extracts from Leslie Stephen's HISTORY OF ENGLISH THOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, *Chapter XII.*

Johnson escaped from the hell of Swift's passion by virtue of that pathetic tenderness of nature which lay beneath his rugged outside. If Swift excites a strange mixture of repulsion and pity, no one can know Johnson without loving him. And what was Johnson's special message to the world? He has given it most completely in *Rasselas*. . . . A disciple of Johnson learns the futility of enquiring into the ultimate purposes of the Creator; but he would acquiesce in the accepted creed. It is as good as any other, considered as a philosophy, and much better considered as supplying motives for the conduct of life. Johnson's fame amongst his contemporaries was

that of a great moralist; and the name represents what was most significant in his teaching.

He was as good a moralist as a man can be who regards the ultimate foundations of morality as placed beyond the reach of speculation. "We know we are free, and there's an end on't," is his answer to the great metaphysical difficulty. He "refutes" Berkeley by kicking a stone. He thinks that Hume is a mere trifler, who has taken to "milking the bull" by way of variety. He laughs effectually at Soame Jenyns's explanation of the origin of evil; but leaves the question as practically insoluble, without troubling himself as to why it is insoluble, or what consequences may follow from its insolubility. Speculation, in short, though he passed for a philosopher, was simply abhorrent to him. He passes by on the other side, and leaves such puzzles for triflers. He has made up his mind once for all that religion is wanted, and that the best plan is to accept the established creed. And thus we have the apparent paradox that, whilst no man sets a higher value upon truthfulness in all the ordinary affairs of life than Johnson, no man could care less for the foundations of speculative truth. His gaze was not directed to that side. Judging in all cases rather by intuition than by logical processes,

he takes for granted the religious theories which fall in sufficiently with his moral convictions. To all speculation which may tend to loosen the fixity of the social order he is deaf or contemptuously averse. The old insidious Deism seems to him to be mere trash; and he would cure the openly aggressive Deism of Rousseau by sending its author to the plantations. Indifference to speculation generates a hearty contempt for all theories. He has too firm a grasp of facts to care for the dreams of fanciful Utopians; his emotions are too massive and rigid to be easily excited by enthusiasts. He ridicules the prevailing cry against corruption. The world is bad enough, in all conscience, but it will do no good to exaggerate or to whine. He has no sympathy with believers in the speedy advent of a millennium. The evils under which creation groans have their causes in a region far beyond the powers of constitution-mongers and political agitators.

> "How small of all that human hearts endure
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!"

These words sum up his political theory. Subordination is the first necessity of man, whether in politics or religion. To what particular form of creed or con-

stitution men are to submit is a matter of secondary importance. No mere shifting of the superficial arrangements of society will seriously affect the condition of mankind. Starvation, poverty, and disease are evils beyond the reach of a Wilkes or a Rousseau. Stick to the facts, and laugh at fine phrases. Clear your mind of cant. Work and don't whine. Hold fast by established order, and resist anarchy as you would resist the devil. That is the pith of Johnson's answer to the vague declamations symptomatic of the growing unrest of European society. All such querulous complaints were classed by him with the fancies of a fine lady who has broken her china, or a fop who has spoilt his fine clothes by a slip in the kennel. He underestimated the significance of the symptoms, because he never appreciated the true meaning of Hume or Voltaire. But the stubborn adherence of Johnson, and such men as Johnson, to solid fact, and their unreasonable contempt for philosophy, goes far to explain how it came to pass that England avoided the catastrophe of a revolution. The morality is not the highest, because it implies an almost wilful blindness to the significance of the contemporary thought, but appropriate to the time, for it expresses the resolute determination of the dogged English mind

not to loosen its grasp on solid fact in pursuit of dreams; and thoroughly masculine, for it expresses the determination to see the world as it is, and to reject with equal decision the optimism of shallow speculation, and the morbid pessimism of such misanthropists as Swift.

INDEX TO NOTES

MACMILLAN'S

POCKET SERIES OF AMERICAN AND ENGLISH CLASSICS

UNIFORM IN PRICE AND BINDING

Cloth - - - - - - 25 Cents Each

Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley. Edited by ZELMA GRAY, East Side High School, Saginaw, Mich.

Browning's Shorter Poems. Edited by FRANKLIN T. BAKER, Teachers' College, New York.

Browning, Mrs., Poems (Selected). By Miss HERSEY, Boston, Mass.

Burke's Speech on Conciliation. Edited by S. C. NEWSOM, Manual Training High School, Indianapolis, Ind.

Byron's Childe Harold. Edited by A. J. GEORGE, High School, Newton, Mass.

Carlyle's Essay on Burns, with Selections. Edited by WILLARD C. GORE, Armour Institute, Chicago, Ill.

Chaucer's Prologue to the Book of the Tales of Canterbury, the Knight's Tale, and the Nun's Priest's Tale. Edited by ANDREW INGRAHAM, Late Headmaster of the Swain Free School, New Bedford, Mass.

Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner. Edited by T. F. HUNTINGTON, Leland Stanford University.

Cooper's Last of the Mohicans. Edited by W. K. WICKES, Principal of High School, Syracuse, N. Y.

Cooper's The Deerslayer.

De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater. Edited by ARTHUR BEATTY, University of Wisconsin.

Dryden's Palamon and Arcite. Edited by PERCIVAL CHUBB, Vice Principal Ethical Culture Schools, New York.

Early American Orations, 1760–1824. Edited by LOUIE R. HELLER, Instructor in English in the De Witt Clinton High School, New York City

Franklin's Autobiography.

George Eliot's Silas Marner. Edited by E. L. GULICK, Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N. J.

Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield. Edited by H. W. BOYNTON, Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass.

Hawthorne's Twice Told Tales. By C. R. GASTON, Richmond Hill High School, Borough of Queens, New York City.

Irving's Alhambra. Edited by ALFRED M. HITCHCOCK, Hartford Public High School, Conn.

Irving's Sketch Book.

Longfellow's Evangeline. Edited by LEWIS B. SEMPLE, Commercial High School, Brooklyn.

Lowell's Vision of Sir Launfal. Edited by HERBERT E. BATES, Manual Training High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Macaulay's Essay on Addison. Edited by C. W. FRENCH, Principal of Hyde Park High School, Chicago, Ill.

Macaulay's Essay on Clive. Edited by J. W. PEARCE, Assistant Professor of English in Tulane University.

Macaulay's Essay on Milton. Edited by C. W. FRENCH.

Macaulay's Essay on Warren Hastings. Edited by Mrs. M. J. FRICK, Los Angeles, Cal.

Milton's Comus, Lycidas, and Other Poems. Edited by ANDREW J. GEORGE, Newton, Mass.

Milton's Paradise Lost. Books I and II. Edited by W. I. CRANE, Steele High School, Dayton, O.

Poe's Prose Tales (Selections from).

Pope's Homer's Iliad. Edited by ALBERT SMYTH, Head Professor of English Language and Literature, Central High School, Philadelphia, Pa.

Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies, and King of the Golden River. Edited by HERBERT E. BATES, Manual Training High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Scott's Ivanhoe. Edited by ALFRED M. HITCHCOCK, Hartford Public High School, Conn.

Scott's Lady of the Lake. Edited by ELIZABETH A. PACKARD, Oakland, Cal.

Scott's Marmion. Edited by GEORGE B. AITON, State Inspector of High Schools for Minnesota.

Shakespeare's As You Like It. Edited by CHARLES ROBERT GASTON, Teacher of English, Richmond Hill High School, Queens Borough, New York City.

Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar. Edited by GEORGE W. HUFFORD and LOIS G. HUFFORD, High School, Indianapolis, Ind.

Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. Edited by CHARLOTTE W. UNDERWOOD, Lewis Institute, Chicago, Ill.

Shakespeare's Macbeth. Edited by C. W. FRENCH, Hyde Park High School.

Shakespeare's Hamlet. Edited by L. A. SHERMAN, Professor of English in the University of Nebraska.

Shelley and Keats (Selections from). Edited by S. C. NEWSOM, Manual Training High School, Indianapolis, Ind.

Southern Poems. Edited by W. L. WEBER, Professor of English Literature in Emory College, Oxford, Ga.

Tennyson's The Princess. Edited by WILSON FARRAND, Newark Academy, Newark, N. J.

Tennyson's Idylls of the King. Edited by W. T. VLYMEN, Principal of Eastern District High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Stevenson's Treasure Island. Edited by HIRAM ALBERT VANCE, Ph. D. (Jena), Professor of English in the University of Nashville.

Mrs. Browning's Poems. Selections. Edited by HELOISE E. HERSEY.

John Woolman's Journal.

Byron's Shorter Poems.

Spenser's Faerie Queene. Book I.